

summer reading  special

Esquire

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

JULY 1996

H
O
T
fiction

STORIES BY
Robert Stone
Tobias Wolff
Bruce Jay Friedman
Anthony Giardina

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE
Infinite Tennis:
Secrets of the Game

MARK LEYNER
My Brother
the Unabomber

MIKE LUPICA
The Most Annoying
People in Sports



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PLAYGROUND FOR
THE
UNIMAGINATIVE**



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JUST A THOUGHT.

CHARINARI MARCO'S RICCARDO STUART NORMAN

JOOP! JEANS 1990



GIORGIO ARMANI

OCCHIALI

Esquire

JULY 1996 VOLUME 128 NO 3

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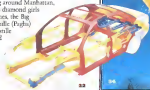
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PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY HIGGINS



MAN'S GUIDE TO DIAMONDS

You're getting her A DIAMOND. Seek PROFESSIONAL HELP immediately.



Maybe you know a little something about diamonds. Maybe not. In any event, chances are she may know more than you do. So get some information. Then you can impress her with your knowledge, as well as with the diamond you bought.

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valuing. They sort rough diamonds into over 5,000 grades before they go on to be cut and polished. So be sure you know what you're buying. Two diamonds of the same size may vary widely in quality. And if a price looks too good to be true, it probably is. *Merely a pebble is a man's best friend.* You want a diamond you can be proud of. So don't be attracted to a jeweler just because of "bargain prices." Find someone you can trust. Ask questions. Ask friends who've gone through it. Ask the jeweler you choose why two diamonds that look the same are priced differently. You want someone who will help you determine quality and value using four characteristics called *the 4 C's*. They are: *Carat*, not the same as shape, but refers to the way the facets, or flat surfaces, are angled. A better cut offers more brilliance; *Color*, actually, close to no color is best; *Clarity*, the fewer natural marks, or "inclusions," the better; *Cut angle*, the larger the diamond, usually the more rare. Remember, the more you know, the more confident you can be in buying a diamond you'll always be proud of. *Lesser men.* For the booklet: *How to buy diamonds you'll be proud to give,* call 1-800-FOREVER, Dept. 24.

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The Coolest Mouth

ONCE EVERY FOUR TO SIX MONTHS, *Esquire* puts together an issue worthy of a lifetime subscription, a reason to believe in manhood, apemanhood, and American ideals. Your April issue has met the challenge. This insight into the humanity of a superstar, Steve Martin ("Mister Lonely Hearts," by Martha Sherrill), the account of young men searching for a new way to be cool ("A Few Good Nites," by David Wells), and the new *Mink* bygone column (Will Kingdon) make this an issue to remember. Topping it off is the photo of Shamus Twain (Taley) and the artfully held cover. The too old for this much excitement from a magazine without a coverfold.

—TOM TRENGOTT
Anchorage, Alaska

Single White Comic

AFTER READING MARTHA SHERRILL'S article, I remembered the ending of the movie *L. A. Story*, when Steve Martin says, "There is someone for everyone, even if you need a pickaxe, a compass, and night goggles to find them."

—JIM SUTHERS
Riverside, Mass.

I LOVE LONG WALKS IN A WHITE TIE, romantic characters for two on the pier, and giving dozens of roses to my beloved. Can I please have my first personal ad in the next issue?

—STEVEN DAVID LEVINE
Orlando, Calif.

Men Like Steve Martin

MEN LIKE STEVE MARTIN and the reason wonderful women like me are sitting home alone every weekend. Middle-aged women who date bachelors who don't talk, control freaks who want the natural growth of a relationship by not getting too close, and head cases who read, talk, and masturbate endlessly about relationships are what's out there, and now the movement has us

own poster child. So Steve, where do these knowledge women possess that men don't? I can sum up the keys to the universe in two words: Grow up.

—JULIE CATALANO
San Antonio, Tex.

MISTER LONELY HEARTS NEEDS A Hug! How about a swift kick in the ass? I am forty years old, unemployed, unemployed, and have no talent, no money, no friends, and no collection. But after listening to Martin's incessant whining and obsessive introspection, I have gained a new, healthy respect for myself. It has done more for me than all the ballroom art and bongo playing in the world.

—STEVEN CRICKLEY
Pittsburgh, Pa.

The Hate Brigade

THE MILITARY'S SOLUTION IS NOT ENDED. In turn problem young adults into model adult citizens. Yet's article shows that people who join hate groups as hate rats and slavishly with a group believe that another group is the cause of their problems. This degenerates into the belief that their problems would be solved if the offending groups were annihilated. The military should

not tolerate anyone obsessed with hate groups in an overt or clandestine manner.

—FRANK WITTELEFARNS
Jacksonville, Fla.

GIVING RECOGNITION TO Gervase Twain (aka Oscar Wilde) seems at first benign, but does a great disservice to the forty-two thousand men and women serving honorably at the base. In any population that size, you can find some people organizing their lives around racial and ethnic hatred.

—LARRY WRIGHT
Pittsburgh, Pa.

I OBJECTED TO TERMINATE MY ENLISTMENT in the United States Navy in 1959 after nine years of service. During that period, I was aware of individuals who held deep convictions of white supremacy. Although their beliefs were known by colored men and officers alike, those in command accepted their stance without question. If a serviceman is removed from the command, it

can take a year or more for a replacement of similar rank and experience to arrive. Unfortunately, selective hearing and looking the other way are the preferred methods for dealing with this serious problem.

—DALE H. SANTELL
Riverside, Calif.

Out of Africa

I REMEMBER VERY CLEARLY TO attribute to *Esquire*. Enduring months of your self-indulgent, boisterous, narcissistic, ignorant, and ludicrous sense of humor is a small price to pay for the occasional broken pencil like John Taylor's Congo journey ("Society, Suez, Corpses, and Whores," April).

—WILLIAM CARTER
Malford, Ohio

AFRICA, IN ITS CLOSE, TENDS TO Amplify the stupidity and selfishness of its observers. Some people find life-long friends there. Others, like Taylor, come home with outrageous characterizations—corrupt politicians, innocent widows, buffoonish servants. Taylor could have come to Washington, D.C., and found far worse, including a married man that rivals Khashoggi's. A bond, sacred when gay in Africa isn't news.

—JAMES BARRETT
Washington, D.C.

I SPENT SEVEN YEARS IN AFRICA. On a newspaper trip to a fifteen-thousand-acre area of Ethiopia, I saw a good deal of starving people, dead and alive, in times so thick I had to walk the lake. I stopped in a village and went into a bar for food, and a woman with a wounded child held up her hand, asking for some. I carried my plate outside and gave it to her. A soldier who had been giving me the run to the door, grabbed the plate, and started to whip the half-dead woman. Later that day, I passed two men swinging from a gallows. I crossed through burning country all over Africa, but, as Taylor noted, the beauty is still inseparable from the horror.

—RICH LUCHENIGER
Tempe, Fla.

Letters to the editor should be mailed to *The Sound and the Fury*, *Esquire*, c/o Time-Publishing, Inc., New York, N.Y. 10020, or sent by E-mail to esquireletters.com. Include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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FOR THOSE WHO SPEND countless hours searching for that elusive edge on the tennis court—whether it's a cosmic wide-body size of Midwestern, a lesson from Nick Bolle-
russi, or a pair of wicker-rimmed shoes worn by either Luke or Murphy Jensen—note this summer: All you have to do is read "The Strong Theory" (page 35), by David Foster Wallace, and you'll give up trying to crack the cop fifty and go back to that old Jack Kramer.

The thirty-four-year-old Wallace is, of course, America's latest literary polymath, whose acclaimed novel *Infinite Jest* (Little, Brown) is to publishing what Borg-McNair was to Winchendon: as long as it is, you never want it to end.

The prize Wallace uses to reveal the responses of tennis in Michael Joyce, a player ranked in the top one hundred in the world. Throughout the piece, Wallace deconstructs everything from the physics of the tennis ball to the dramatic event patterns of the prize.

Still, Wallace—a former junior player who competed in regional USTA matches until he was eighteen—is quick to point out that the game Joyce and his peers play is "as unrecognizable to me as grand master chess." Although, as he says, when he and his pals tore up the junior circuit in the Midwest, "I always deflated myself that if I just trained a little harder."

Wallace's previous books include *The Book of the Specimen* and *Girl with Curious Hair*. Next year, Little, Brown will publish a collection of his nonfiction pieces.

IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE SITTING THAT Wallace would make his Esquire debut in our thirteenth-annual summer fiction issue, which has once again been assembled by literary editor Will Byrnie, associate literary editor Erika Mesrobian, and fiction editor Russ Hill.

Freddie Esquire contributor Robert Ross provides a tale of sailing,



David Foster Wallace

sex, and death in the Caribbean ("Under the Pinna," page 70). "The story really did happen as I wrote it, moment by moment," says Stone, who served in the Navy and the merchant marine. "The best sea stories ought to be read on dry land with a drink in your



Robert Stone



Bruce Jay Friedman



hand." The author of *Cambridge Rock*, Stone will see his first collection of short stories published by Houghton Mifflin in May.

When *P. Scott Fitzgerald* died in 1940, he was publishing the *Pitt-Holby* stories in *Esquire* and *Smoking*, what might have been another masterpiece, *The Last Years*. But when he had lived! That is the premise of *Anthony Gaudine's* story "The Second Act" (page 64). "Fitzgerald is someone you're not supposed to read after a certain age," says Gaudine, author of *Men with Debs* and *A Day's Promises*. "But I went back and let himself be written." Gaudine's book of short stories, *The Country of Marry*, will be published by Random House next spring.

Julius Wolff's monthly tale "The Chain" (page 54) explores the perils of vengeance. "This story is only loosely based on the truth, from when my son was savaged by a dog when he was five," says Wolff, whose most recent book, *Le Phosphore Arroy* (Vintage), details his experiences in Vietnam. "I wanted revenge, and I thought about what might happen." "The Chain" will be included in Wolff's new collection, *The Night in Queens*, due in October from Knopf.

Bruce Jay Friedman describes "A Public in His Shoe" (page 40) as "a fictionalized account of a couple of weeks I spent with a celebrated British movie star who did in fact die under similar circumstances." (Take a shot in the dark as to who.) And while *The Collected Short Fiction of Bruce Jay Friedman* was published last year, he thinks it's probably "too late to reach professors—though I could still possibly be a good loanmaster." His latest novel, *A Fisher's River*, will be published by Donald E. Fine in September.

So, just how many new TV networks are there, anyway? Senior writer *Randall Rothenberg* channel-surfs in "Planet of the Apes" (page 41). Rothenberg says he watches about twenty-five hours a week—although we think he's lowballing. "My fantasy is to start SatelliteTV, devoted to the great manner rise of broadcasting history. Arthur Treacher, Regis Philbin, Hugh Downs, and, of course, Andy Richter." Check it

Gravity...The Force that Pulls You Closer

GRAVITY

FRAGRANCE FOR MEN

Reality Check

By Joannette Walls

SHOOTING DUCTS

Don't Cry for Me, Mr. Clinton

BILL CLINTON MAY HAVE provided the fodder for one of the viciousstopping coverage spots against him. According to a source, Republican operatives are working on an ad that uses footage from last November's electoral session in which the president appears to be manufacturing grief. In a segment captured by the "dayshow crew, Clinton is seen walking back from the service in a jovial mood until he realizes that the TV cameras are on him, then he becomes sober and wipes away a tear. The peculiar segment has become a subject of debate among

political journalists and a subject of glee among foes of Bill Clinton, an insider says, it may be the subject of an ad cooked up by the Republicans to be used on behalf of Bob Dole. The source says that the ad agency preparing the commercial is using the song "A Little Bit of Tears" as the soundtrack. "They were even trying with the idea of trying to get their hands on his taped Whitehouse interview, but that may have been too much," says the insider. "Some think

that even this is below the belt and inappropriate, so it might not happen, but [Clinton] is saying that he is taking it with him to his new home, former NBC chairman Dick Sawyer's Golden Family Entertainment."

her early years in New York, she "lived on real sex and the moment, without the of female entry."

"No one had wants to touch the book," says a Time insider. And though the magazine is not obliged to review Friday's work, the source says that if a date, Time is hoping to find someone who won't savage the book but also won't rave about it, "or we'd look like Time was the house organ—excuse the pun." So Time has turned to well-known outside writers, including Woody from Clinton and Norman Maclean, but has had trouble finding someone willing to take on the task.

SPIRITUALITY

The Seven Habits of Highly Pumped-Up People

AROND SCHWARZMEYER doesn't want to be known as just another pretty body. The actor here is planning to write what one publishing insider describes as an "inspirational how-to" book. The project was conceived by former Susan D. Sawyer editor Bob Kachas, but a source says he is taking it with him to his new home, former NBC chairman Dick Sawyer's Golden Family Entertainment.

"Arnold's got some surprisingly good ideas for it," says the source. "His brain is his most under-appreciated muscle."

The Bidder End

FOLLOWING THE INSANE REACTION TO THE *Jackie Kennedy Onassis* auction at Sotheby's, the next major yard sale is undoubtedly the much talked-about *Jeffrey Epstein* auction. Robert Sawyer, a Milwaukee lawyer, is attempting to sell the serial killer's "memorabilia," with proceeds going to the families of his victims. So if the Jackie O prices were too high, here's a little comparison shopping for Jeffrey O.



Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis
Greatest accomplishment: Caretaker



Jeffrey Epstein
Greatest accomplishment: Killed a lot

Some auction highlights:
A forty-year engagement diamond from *Annals of Onassis*, JFK's husband and golf club, a BMW

Some auction highlights:
His religious, friends, handbags, knives, gold chain, an empty rum bottle, a sponge, and some old bed sheets

Who the hell would buy:
A few hundreds of old magazines

Who the hell would buy:
Any of it.

Surprisingly not for sale:
His trademark sunglasses

Surprisingly not for sale:
His brain.

The bidding crowd:
Museum members, dealers, friends

The bidding crowd:
Museum members, dealers, friends



Arnold Schwarzenegger
Greatest accomplishment: Killed a lot



Heidi Fleiss
Greatest accomplishment: Killed a lot

Surrounding controversy:
No reputable auction house will go near it, and a group of investors may offer an auction in order to prevent the auction

Surrounding controversy:
No reputable auction house will go near it, and a group of investors may offer an auction in order to prevent the auction

CONCLUSION

Smugglers' Blues

HOW IS A WOMAN expected to accumulate a sizeable collection of the stuff she can't sneak a thing or two into the country? *Lee Radzicki*, *Jackie Kennedy Onassis*'s kid sister, was stopped at customs a while ago for bringing back a few rabbits she had neglected to declare, says a source. As is the policy, Radzicki's name was put on a sort of blacklist due to the Customs Service, and whenever Mrs. Mark Hess comes into the country it took her forever to get through. So she heard about *Arnold Schwarzenegger*, *Mike Feldman*, to try to get her name deleted from the computer. "Your source" has fingerprint information," said Feldman, who would confirm only that he spoke with the Customs Service.



Heidi Fleiss
Greatest accomplishment: Killed a lot

"It infuriated her that she had to go through a huge hassle every time she came back from a trip," says the source. "She figured Feldman could cut through the red tape for her."

FOURPRODUCTION

Free Heidi Fleiss!

HEIDI FLEISS IS APPEARING in her federal convictions with information from an unlikely source, her nemesis, *Michael Viner*, publisher of *Dove Books* and the man who brought us the literary history of *Pop Culture*.

Fleiss says Viner—who published *So I Never Had Love in This Town Again*, an exposé of prostitution in Los Angeles written by none other Heidi fleiss—asked her to be in a documentary he's making. "He offered me \$50,000 and some private house will go near it, and a group of investors may offer an auction in order to prevent the auction

this man held back staff until now," Fleiss says. Viner has confirmed only that he and Heidi had a conversation.

Fleiss adds that her lawyer is filing a motion for a new trial based on this new material. Furthermore, Fleiss, who now produces an underwear line, has returned to her original lawyer, *Anthony Brooker*. He agreed to represent her for next to nothing after attorney Robert Borner dumped her because she couldn't pay the nearly \$50,000 she owed him. "He said it was really supposed to be \$100,000 but he was going to be a deal," she says. "I mean, how many hours am I supposed to be able to sell?"



Norman Pearlstine
Greatest accomplishment: Killed a lot

WYLLIES

Oh, God, It's Friday!

TIME'S ONE ASSIGNMENT to Time magazine that even the toughest writers don't want to tackle: reviewing the boss's wife's book. *Wendy Friday*, wife of Time Inc. editor in chief

Norman Pearlstine and the author of *My Mother My Self and Women on Top*, has just come out with another scathing work of criticism, *The Power of Beauty*. In it, she discusses, among other things, the physical unattractiveness of the male and female sex organs, how she seduced Pearlstine on their first date,

and how during their courtship he wanted to live an airplane to write women loves money across the sky. In one most-noticed-to-be-remembered-to-know moment, Friday writes that during

Reality Check

ELIMINATIONS

Does She Do Windows?

THE FIRST VICTIM OF Bill Clinton's "Nannygate" problems may soon become a victim of downsizing. **Zot Bard,** the president's first choice for attorney general, is currently general counsel at Aetna, the life-insurance company that, in an all-g-bill-ham deal, is acquiring U. S. Healthcare Inc. to create the nation's largest medical-benefits company. As part

of that deal, Aetna has been going through what has been called "a significant restructuring," and hundreds are expected to lose their jobs. One insider says that Bard's job has been targeted.

"We're not talking about resigning," says the source. "We're talking about eliminating." She's highly qualified and shouldn't have trouble getting another position—and the thinking is that she may go to Yale Law, where her husband is a professor. Still, this seems to fit the Zot-can't-get-a-break category.

KID STUFF

Rule #1: Do Not Ground Your Children

Derek may not have been perfect, but you may prefer his child-minding techniques to those of **Don Warlock**. Hitheway is the mother of seven-year-old **Jessica Hithew,** who was killed in April when the single-engine plane she was piloting crashed. Since the accident, the unconventional mother—Jessica, for instance, was delivered in a bathtub without a doctor or a midwife, and her parents insisted that real life was her best tutor—has been writing a book on raising children.

Hitheway, who describes herself as an artist and a spiritual healer, has been criticized accordingly in the press, but her neighbors insist that her children seemed happy and well-adjusted.

"I've been writing for many years about my children, but the week that I have isn't up to par with where I am," says Hitheway, who isn't quite ready to shop the project. "I was calling it *Noble Hithew*, until I discovered there's something subtle about parenting. Then I was calling it *Embracing Hithew*, and I found that very condescending. So I'm calling it *Individual First*."

Nevertheless, the book idea isn't going over so well in the industry. Says one source, "I wouldn't call her an ideal candidate to write a book on how to raise your kids—alone."

HYPOCRISY

Turning a Blind Eye

THE LIGHTHOUSE seems to have lost sight of whom it's supposed to be helping. The organization for the blind, which is run by the socially connected Barbara Silverstone and has to Minnie correspondents, **Wills** Watson on board, recently took a \$45 million headquarters in Manhattan. To help pay for it, the Lighthouse is selling a factory that employed the visually impaired.

Silverstone has also planned that the factory was a dream on the organization's resources. The Lighthouse has to come up with millions to pay for the new headquarters, and, though the group denies that the two actions are related, it is looking to sell the factory for \$1 million. "A sheltered workshop for able-bodied, visually impaired workers is not consistent with the Lighthouse philosophy," says a spokeswoman, who adds that the Lighthouse is helping the workers find jobs in the private sector.



Watson looking the other way.

"How you ever gone into an employment agency with a Seeing Eye dog?" responds a former worker who remains unemployed. "They don't want to know you. My reason was, 'I'll pay five million for a new building and you can't afford to give me a job!'"

Some co-workers also appealed to Watson, thinking that his close might be valuable, but, alas, the usually well-informed, inside-dog journalist seemed uncharacteristically unformed and tentative. "I called Barbara [Silverstone] about it," says Watson. "If I had more familiarity... it's been a couple of months since I spoke to her. I don't know enough about the facility." Another case of the blind leading the blind.

GIFT GIVING

A Bunch of Carats

WOMEN CONTINUE TO COLLAPSE AT SYNERGISTIC **Wills**. The release and a response to *subliminally* in *Style* magazine's *homework* prize bundles from poster to the turn **Barry Watson** for the Academy Awards. The gesture is common among celebrities but is frowned upon by "hard-core" organizations. The *Style* incident even prompted an inquiry by *Time* Inc.'s in-house newsletter, *F&L* Martha Nelson, managing editor of *Style*, says, "That is not a scandal. We are not planning a story on Harry Winston."

"Jewelry should never be used to subject your night cover," says one *Time* insider. "It's a potential conflict of interest."

"Give me a break," responds an *Style* source. "It's done by journalists all the time. What are you supposed to do go to the awards in park jewelry? It's not like we have a *Sharon Stone* situation—it was all measured." ■

IT'LL IMPRESS THE NEIGHBORS. THAT IS, IF THEY EVER SEE IT.



INTRODUCING THE JEEP CHEROKEE CLASSIC

It will certainly be tempting to drive Cherokee Classic right off the dealer's lot to some remote mountaintop not found on any map.

This limited edition has this classic Cherokee's authentic and features body-color side cladding, grille, wheel flares, and air dam. You'll also notice some serious 3-spoke alloy rims.

On the inside, there's standard air conditioning. Driver's air bag. A full floor console. Power steering. Roof rack. A rear-window wiper/washer.

Leather-wrapped tilt steering wheel. And a 190 horsepower I-6 engine. Plus, the Classic comes with your choice of two- or four-wheel drive.

If the neighbors eventually do get a glimpse of your Cherokee and if they ask you about the options, tell them there are about a million to choose from: Monument Valley, the Grand Canyon, the Black Hills of South Dakota, Yosemite, the Rubicon Trail, etc., etc. ■

Jeep

THERE'S ONLY ONE

Always wear your seat belt for a fully effective air bag. Jeep is a registered trademark of Chrysler Corporation.



Batteries Don Warlock would love!



Sometimes You Can Tell a Book by Its Cover

Among the many great creative geniuses to walk the halls of Esquire, few have been as great or more creative than George Lois! Probably not, a fact that remains in proper recognition with the recent publication of *Covering the Six: George Lois, the Esquire Era* (Museum). Back in 1960, thirty-one-year-old adman Lois launched his first cover for this magazine, and with that he became as much a part of the New Journalism as any wordsmith of the era. Lois is the man who put *Soupy Sales* in a *Suava* hat, Andy Warhol in a can of Campbell's soup, Roy Cohn in a towel bath, and a smoking Lieutenant Calley among a group of Vietnamese typhons. He invented twenty-two covers in all, and in these a cover from any other magazine of that period that anyone can remember? Well, can't that be for sure, and neither can you. Some forty years later, the images stand as a single graphic testament to a decade that was a provocative, attention-grabbing era itself.



148 MONTH ON NAUTICAL DAY BY CYNTHIA PAGLIA: July 24, the national holiday of France, commemorates

"Oh my God—
we hit
a little girl."

The last cover of M. Compagnon
From Left: The 1960s Edition

THE KIND OF WOMAN

Kyra Sedgwick

In the era of the experimental actress, you might think Kyra Sedgwick has it easy. Not so, she claims. "When I was a young actress, everyone thought I had a big, wild, yella mouth," she says. It's through a smile that Sedgwick is her screen her face, it looks like a rubber band about to snap. "I literally didn't get jobs because of it." One job it may have helped her get was the role of Rebecca's brother-in-law: another so is last year's *Something to Talk About*. "She was the person I with I was," Sedgwick says about the screaming Bessie from a character remember then a valiant of sobriety. "I wanted to show I had some balls." Unconscionable, considering that she has grabbed major attention as Tim Allen's *Deer*. Last night, Sedgwick is *Deer* on the *Fourth of July*.

This month, Sedgwick will be seen in her first big leading role, in *Phenomena*, playing a night nurse who kills for a secret (like *Twelve*). In real life, she's married to Kevin Kline, and they have two kids. He directed her in next month's *Living on a Prayer*, a movie about two women driven together by a shared history of sexual abuse, a subject Sedgwick says she understands, having come from a dad that produced *Wicked* *Therapy* actress Edie Sedgwick. In it, Kyra gets a lesson from mother except Helen Mirren; the sister Mirren's wife was not involved. "But," Kyra adds, as that sister's mouth begins to stretch toward her ears, "Babe was a great lover." —NINA MARTIN



the start of the French Revolution, the most violent chapter in the story of modern

Not Your Daddy's Caddy



European models, American style: The 1996 Cadillac Catera.

THE BRAGGERS AND recent badge that has adorned Cadillac since 1909 is borrowed from the coat of arms of the car's namesake, French engineer Le Sieur Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac. The younger son of a French noble family in that dark age of progenitors sure, he went abroad to seek his fortune, founding Detroit along the way.

When a special series in Cadillac set out to promote a new smaller car, the Catera, among the full, a began by naming with the badge. The original heraldic emblems on black ducks. But for the Catera's marketing campaign, one of the ducks is red, and adorned—a symbol that the Catera is a new kind of Cadillac.

And that is an odd duck of a car. With the Catera, Cadillac has gone ahead to seek renewed fortune. The model is a variant of the Opel Design MK6 de-

veloped by GM in Europe. There, the car outsells such sales as the BMW 520i, but here it will be priced like a BMW 320i at around \$25,000.

The Catera doesn't quite match like a Cadillac, nor does it handle as agile as much like one. With a stiffer ride but more agile handling than a mid-sized Cadillac, the Catera is driven by an outstanding two-hundred-horsepower diesel overhead-cam V-6. In the Opel, the engine is not in

crisis at triple-digit overboost speeds. Here, the manual transmission has been tweaked, and the engine has been tuned to produce more of the unique American demand at highway speeds and turned to a top speed of 135 miles per hour. The engine takes the Catera from zero to sixty in a respectable 8.5 seconds. It also brings with it the



Only ducks: The essence of the Catera is transported by a red duck.

thrifty nose European like, while Cadillac has traditionally bragged of its quiet. For the American market, Cadillac has also added five air and an hour's warranty, upholstery, and Twilight Sentinel, its flip on the lights as dusk, a Cadillac innovation of the 1980s that for some odd reason has never caught on in Europe. The Catera borrows styling cues from the Seville that are aimed at making the car look longer, lower, and more like a Cadillac.

The idea of rebadging an Opel as a Cadillac reminds some of the infamous Cadillac Commission of the early 1980s, a rebadged Chevy Cavalier. Cadillac hopes the Catera will turn out more like the La Salle, the elegant small Cadillac that sold successfully in the 1920s.

Despite the fact that Cadillac is focused in mass and ads as the very pinnacle of American carlines, despite its rising quality ratings (the Bluebook in the north-eastern United States in the mass market), it's the only car company in the world that doesn't appear to prosper almost anywhere. That cars don't exactly have legs, but they always seem to land on them anyway, and that's a handy talent. For this town, where surprises appear around every corner.

Baltimore has always been a checkerboard, and neighborhood walking is the way to play (though you'll want to drive from one to the next). Some of the best spots are centered on old covered street markets, which sell all sorts of excellent food and give a vaguely European feel to the surroundings. Both Cross Street and Hollins markets are worth exploration, for themselves and for the little bars and restaurants and music clubs surrounding them—but be careful getting into and out of the liner, which happens to be in the middle of devastated project housing and open car markets.

It should be on its own terms, after all, that the Catera may as well. Cadillac's experts in heraldry explain that the ducks are merle, a word often depicted—without legs—on the coats of arms of younger houses as a symbol that they are to succeed, if only be on the wings of virtue.



TRAVEL MADESON SMARTY BELL

Virgin Maryland

MORE PEOPLE WOULD say that of Baltimore has a town center, it's the center, but I prefer the blue crab, for its outward splendor, its inner awareness, its wonderful ability to prosper almost anywhere. That cars don't exactly have legs, but they always seem to land on them anyway, and that's a handy talent. For this town, where surprises appear around every corner.

Baltimore has always been a checkerboard, and neighborhood walking is the way to play (though you'll want to drive from one to the next). Some of the best spots are centered on old covered street markets, which sell all sorts of excellent food and give a vaguely European feel to the surroundings. Both Cross Street and Hollins markets are worth exploration, for themselves and for the little bars and restaurants and music clubs surrounding them—but be careful getting into and out of the liner, which happens to be in the middle of devastated project housing and open car markets.

If you have the wind for it, a chain from Cross Street Market will bring you to the top of Federal Hill, the park as its height gives a wide angle view of the Baltimore waterfront. That may be as close as you want to get to the official Inner Harbor complex, which, though noticeably less amiable than other Rease Corporation efforts, such as New York's South Street Seaport, is still a tourist trap. The aquarium is certainly worth one visit, especially if you can figure out a way to avoid the crowds, but the best thing about the Inner Harbor is the water taxis, which will ride you around all day for three bucks and can take you all the way to Fells Point.

In the old days, Fells Point was a red-light district for merchants sailors, and a slightly degenerate art still lingers. The neighborhood is packed with curiosity shops and restaurants (Mellie at Bertha's is not to be missed). There are dozens of bars, and most offer live music—the highest concentration of such spots anywhere in town. Best music bar is Sunday afternoon at the Cat's Eye, for Steve Kramer's powerful blues stride piano and the bonus of Glenn

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Bottom: Baltimore's Bertha's Bay, Cat's Eye's Museum at the Miller, and at Cross Street Market.



Where to Stay

The Clifton Hotel (313 Calverley Street; 410-727-7183) is the best bet for anyone interested in Baltimore's elite, grander architecture. The Renaissance Harbor-Plex Hotel (283 East Pratt Street; 410-947-1200) is just across the street from the National Aquarium. The Harbor-Walsh (3400 Fall Street; 410-323-5777) is located near, reasonably priced, and so easy reach from most Fells Point rooms.

Where to Eat

Bertha's (1734 North Broadway; 410-227-0790) deserves its reputation for great seafood. Other good and moderately priced restaurants in Fells Point include John Sherm's Inn (1000 Thomas Street; 410-327-0401) and M. Gertner (501 North Broadway; 410-725-0375), which is fancy, French, and very good. It's perhaps worth noting that Gertner's door is about as far north as out-of-towners should venture on Broadway. For sophisticated, trendy French-bred cuisine in a country setting, try the Miller Inn (1653 York Road; 410-725-0266).

Moonata on harmonica. Their closing act is open for stars and stars to attract the best bluesmen in town.

Best time to come: mid-July to mid-October. There are several ways to see these things, and all are unforgettable.

Madison Street Bill's most recent novel is *All Souls' Rising* (Farrar)



The women of summer:
Softball pitcher Michelle Smith,
left, and Bel Richardson, the
team's graceful closer.

GAMERANSHIP MARK MARVEL

They Throw Like Girls

CONSIDER, AN AMERICAN, what it will mean to see our side totally crush the rest of the world in a team sport without having to root the best players in the NBA to do it. Imagine, as a fan, how it will feel to watch the spring usage of our national pastime played without the specter of multimillion-dollar contracts or threatened

workouts hanging over it. Now think, as a man, what it would be like to face a lady pitcher who can underhand the ball by your nose at seventy miles per hour.

Michelle Smith's career is even more impressive when you know that exactly ten years before the very day that woman's fast pitch softball makes its Olympic debut this month, the American

team's ace nearly lost her pitching arm. On that day, July 21, 1976, Smith nodded off in the front seat of a pickup truck her father was driving. As he took a turn, she flew out the door and into a roadside post, which almost amputated her left arm, removing part of the elbow and ripping the meat from its attachment to the bone. "It was like losing my

whole identity," the twenty-nine-year-old says now.

Nine months after the accident, Smith was back on the mound. Within a year, she'd added nearly five miles per hour to her fastball. Her pitches now regularly cross the plate at more than seventy miles an hour, but because the plate is forty feet from the pitching rubber—as opposed to sixty feet in baseball in



baseball—her best seems, to a batter, to be better than Randy Johnson's.

But don't think the bigger ball makes a big difference—except maybe in terms of a batter's ego. After being struck out by former national-team pitcher Kathy Accrabin in a softball exhibition, Reggie Jackson reportedly barked the type of the event from being shown in public.

The effort to get Smith and her teammates into the Olympics started three decades ago, when the International Softball Federation began establishing divisions and exhibition games around the world. At the first world championships, in 1975, only five teams showed up, for short of the forty international competitors now needed to win Olympic status.

The American women have always dominated the sport, and they'll go into the Atlanta games with a 10-1 record in international competition over the last decade. (That loss, after a

10-0 game-winning streak, was to the Chinese.) Predictably, Asia is where our toughest Olympic competition will come from. Indoor softball is such a big deal in Japan that corporations such as Toyota and Honda often recruit players from around the world. Smith, for instance, moved to Japan four years ago, where she teaches factory employees English in the morning and plays softball in the afternoon. (Her nickname is "the Lousiana.")

The other American softballer to watch this month is team legend Dore Richardson, a prodigy who had to decide at age fifteen whether to run pro or hold out for the day when the game might make it into the Olympics. She held out, an act of faith that has finally been rewarded—almost twenty years later.

"When we didn't make it into the games in '56," Richardson says, "I felt like I'd missed my last shot at the Olympics." She was

Take Me Out to the Olympics

The U.S.A. Women's National Softball Team's toughest game will be against the Taiwanese officially Chinese Taipei team on Monday, July 22. The full schedule:

July 21, 9:00 a.m. (EST), vs. Puerto Rico
July 22, 9:00 a.m., vs. Chinese Taipei
July 23, 6:30 p.m., vs. Japan
July 24, 6:30 p.m., vs. the Netherlands
July 25, 9:00 a.m., vs. Australia
July 26, 10:30 a.m., vs. Canada
July 27, 9:00 a.m., vs. China

The semifinals will take place on July 28 at 9:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.; the finals will be held on July 29 at 1:00 p.m.

thirty then, just finishing medical school and about to begin a five-year residency as an orthopedic surgeon.

Undaunted, she changed her sliding technique from headfirst to footfirst to protect her surgeon's hands. Since there were no batting cages open when she got off her hospital rotation at night, she built one in her bedroom so she could work on her swing.

She's played shortstop on almost every national team of the past two

decades. "Back when it didn't mean money and it didn't mean steroids," she says, "it just meant playing for the love of the game."

Twenty years on, that love endures, and it's what unites Richardson with her fellow Olympians—even her better-known counterparts on the men's hardball diamond. "The whole story here," she concludes, "is that you're an athlete and you want to compete. Regard that I'm a girl. Forget that he's a boy. Let's just play ball."

Babe Ruthless: Smith, above, has a 70-mile-an-hour fastball; shortstop Richardson built a hitting cage in her bedroom.



housed just seven prisoners—four foreigners, one noble, and two lunatics. Within hours, the

citizens, raked by gunfire, forced their way in. The governor of the hostile, a marquis, was



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TO YOUR HEALTH: HOW TO STAY FIT, SANE, AND ON TOP OF YOUR GAME. EDITED BY ANITA LEGLER

The Male Animal

THE MALE MIND MICHAEL DOUGL

You'll Deal with It Later

RECENTLY, I GOT together with an old friend whose divorce had just become final. Along with his legal emancipation came the news that his ex-wife was planning to move to another city with their eight-year-old son. As

the night went on, his rage manifested. He professed ignorance that his marriage had been so unstable, blamed his ex for sabotaging a long and mutually satisfying relationship, and claimed to feel emotionally wounded. But, I asked, hadn't she announced a variety of marriage-saving

schemes long before their separation—counseling, vacations, marriage talks? He slumped back in his chair. "I know," he said. "It's all my fault."

My friend's seamless shape-shift from outraged victim to carnal criminal typifies the male-guilt

game. Men are not prone to excessive self-blame, and when they do turn onto others—the cause of most guilt—they tend to look everywhere but in the mirror for an excuse. "Men are much more likely to externalize the source of a problem," says Glenn Gould, a University of Missouri-Columbia psychologist who counsels primarily male patients. "It's not about them, it's about their partner, the government, an event that made them act a certain way."

This is adaptive in that it allows them to get on with important business, although it interferes with their ability to take responsibility, at least initially, for their actions.

Men may often externalize—that is to say, avoid—guilt better than women do, but when we can't dodge the error of our ways, we usually beat up on ourselves more than they do. Why? According to New York City psychoanalyst John Mandler Ross, the guilt you feel is tied to your senses' power. In men, the stern, judgmental voice of the father booms deep inside, whereas the female can sometimes have a softer, maternal tone. Guess whose voice is more intimidating? "Men have really profound indications on their psyche caused by their own aggression, which they turn against themselves," says Ross. "They have a more inflexible

conscience than do women, who are more tolerant of other people and themselves. Men are more driven by principles of absolute justice, which can be harsh." Translation: Men punish themselves more for their transgressions than women do.

The conventional thinking, of course, is that, with other emotions, women have a monopoly on guilt. Statistically, more of them are anxious or depressed—conditions that often involve guilt. But, like other appearances, surface mental states are deceptive. Experiments have demonstrated that when men and women are shown upsetting images—pictures of

Why are men better at moving guilt feelings to the back of the brainpan when necessary?

patients with distressed children, for instance—women readily express discomfort both verbally and through body language but show few physiological signs of stress. Men may

claim to be unmoved, but measurements of their galvanic skin response and heartbeat suggest otherwise. This "hidden mental battle" makes them more vulnerable to stress-related illnesses.

Why are men better at moving guilt feelings to the back of the brainpan when necessary? Evolution taught us that it doesn't pay to live over having berated your leaving partner's overreaction when your teenage toddlers

are squawking and a herd of mosquitoes has just pulled up at a nearby watering hole. Faced with a problem, we want to grab a spouse, or a Seward, and get to work. That's plenty of time to reassess later. For that matter, who among us is eager to deal up the wonderful immortal voice of our father?

Increasingly, our capacity to store off guilt also enables us to move quickly to put it behind us by issuing a simple apology. We expect our relationships to return naturally to their formerly harmonious state—often to the satisfaction of our disaffected partners, who can issue a grudge until it grows a head. When resolving disagreements, Ross contends, women tend to be more obstinate.

Which, as my friend discovered, can have some serious consequences.

Essentially a burner that screws into a fuel tank the way a plywood partition slips in an IDEM, the **Post 1000** stove is among the smallest on the market. The power-lift fuel carrier holds a mini tank that balances the slow-igniting safety of butane with the reliable flameability of propane. The pot supports swing inward for storage. Weight: 5.8 ounces, price: \$25.



The **Slip Fire Jet** is a widely admired Swiss-made high-altitude stove, which means it's designed to burn quietly (most stoves roar unapologetically) and safely in close quarters—a cramped tent, say. Its sheet-metal baffles fold up like a miniature coffee can and open out to resemble a circular satellite—very cool. Fuel: unleaded gasoline, white gas, kerosene; weight: 11 ounces, price: \$80.



Another model in Peak's Ti series burns propane in the **Eastman Igniter** stove, which means it's truly unleaded. Its push-button piezoelectric lighter means you can leave the soggy matches and bulky lighters at home. It also has adjustable external pot supports to maximize stability. Weight: 10.3 ounces, price: \$45.



THE STUFF OF SPORT

Packing Heat

Quips will wither: A press band of ecologically correct backpackers beams high up on the Grand Dismal, and the first item they extract from their baggage is a high-tech gadget that resembles a miniature house-lacking wheels. So much for delivering oneself into nature's unaided majesty. Not far better this than the plundering of delicate ecosystems for scrap wood to feed smoky, dangerous firelites. To conquer nature, NARS-style, here are five stoves that burn bright but light.

—BEN BUCKLEMAN

The **MSR Whisperlite Shaker Jet** stove is the latest in the line that dominates the field. Its edge on the competition is an internal fuel jet cleaner, a weighted needle that clears the fuel aperture when the stove is turned upside down and shaken. The legs cleverly fold flat together. Fuel: white gas; weight: 16 ounces; price: \$66.



The state of the art from the Swedes who started it all, the **Primus 2022** Dismal is made almost entirely of, yes, titanium, making it the lightest—and the priciest. It has push-button piezo-ignition, and the burner and windproof valve grip fold up and snap with pleasing precision into a carrying box the size of a can of Spam. Fuel: butane/propane; weight: 2.4 ounces; price: \$248.



Blown Away

WINDSURFING is a 100-megawatt machine, one of us, getting a customary pop talk. Behind us, on a grassy slope and beyond it, the rocky hills of Elverta Mountain in upstate New York. We're here to ask What's it like to jump off a cliff?

"We never jump off cliffs," our paragliding instructor, Lene Lunde, declares. "We run off hills."

The sport of paragliding was started in the 1970s by European paracutists who realized that alpine paracutists would make fine launching pads. Paraglider fly above their hang gliders, and they soon take. After all, isn't flying easier on inflated parachute like swimming in a life jacket? But it's not a parachute; it's an inflatable wing, and if it stalls, it can crumple into so much dead air. Lunde instantly emphasizes safety: "Don't get greedy for air time. Today's about learning how the sport works."

We start on the ground, practicing handling the wing, which unfolds out of a backpack like a Japanese paper fan to form a thirty-foot double canopy. Lunde shows us how to run into the wind so that the wing inflates, stiff-likes, and lifts itself into the sky. It's like flying a giant kite, except that most of the time this kite is flying you. For an hour, I write this about once of a day's parade that as it becomes impossibly, turning on the ground and inflating.

"If you can control the wing on the ground, you'll have no problem in the air," Lunde calls out as I fly by.

Around noon, the sun comes out, and a breeze whips up the heavy hill. That's up it, and when the wind is just right, Lunde gives me a thumbs-up. At first, I'm trailing forward in slow motion; then the resistance slackens, and my speed builds, until that swirling moment when I feel myself airborne, meeting, with nothing between me and the earth but twenty feet of air and a serious wedge.

I lead, gently, fifty feet away. The risk's been as much in a mid-air stall and half as long, so I double-time it back up the hill for a second jump, then a third. Soon, I'm wip-out-jump just down climbing but love the need to concentrate. My fifth trip down the hill, I'm down off the mark, and the wing starts to collapse behind me. Instinctively, I push forward on the lines. There's much slanting from Lunde, but I press forward, sliding down the hill. With a whooping, the canopy lifts, yanks backward. Much action, flailing green and blue, the dying strale of the collapsing airfoil. I'm so low on the hill at the base of the hill, two long arms in my lap. Lunde, a few feet away, laughs.

"Two and!" he says. "Two were greedy." —*Jeffrey White*

A one-day introductory program at the Basement Paragliding Center, Elverta, New York (800-667-2177) is \$120. The United States Paragliding Association (USPA) provides a list of paragliding schools worldwide on its website.



KAMA SUTRA JR.

Seedless Sex



EDMUND MEN START conserving natural resources and don't know when to stop

- Sting, the pop singer who never runs late, advocates sex ejaculating during sex, and he practices what he preaches
- Woody Harrison refrained from ejaculating through three months of fasting to achieve a *Natural Born Killer* instinct
- Then there's Rob "As a professional, I can't combine singing and sex," says Bob, a bartender with a major open company "But if I

have sex and don't ejaculate, my voice is still strong afterward." (Because Rob also sings with the choir at a local church, he would rather not use his real voice.) Rob learned how to hold it in years ago from Marlene Chao, whose *Multigloss* Men is just one form of *Harper's* Francisco Sting and other new-age luminaries built up on the remote coastline at the White Lotus Foundation, a wildly popular yoga center in Santa Barbara. According to Chao, a man who doesn't ejaculate will reduce vital energy

away from his groin, up the spine, and finally to the brain, boosting strength, fertility, and mental acuity. The Taoist-based techniques involve pressing down on a spot between the scrotum and the anus to stop semen in the body. He claims his other "sexual kung fu" exercises combat impotence, raise sperm counts, and, of course, lengthen the penis. Dr. Robert Chao, a professor of urology at Boston University, in *Skeptical Research*, he says, suggests that untested semen is apocryphal passed on the written as you urinate. "I can't even imagine how that could have health benefits," he says. In fact, holding it in may decrease your fertility, causing sperm to become

stale. "If you wait too long—maybe a month, maybe less—your sperm probably won't swim that well." As for sharpening a natural-born-killer instinct, Chao admits that "it's probably stressful to suppress a physiological reflex like ejaculation. But if you want stress, why don't you just punch yourself in the head or drive in heavy traffic?" Then there's the other Rob: Rob Beaman spent the night before the 1988 Olympic long-jump finals ejaculating with abandon. The next day, he got out of bed and kept twenty-nine feet two-and-a-half inches, a world record that stood for twenty-three years. —ANDREW CHAIKIN

REMEDIES

What's Best for What Ails You?

YOU'RE STANDING there, scanning the vast—may, bewildering—druggery pharmacopoeia for pain relief. And in the aftermath of recent ad wars, you're looking a range of painkillers. Will some seemingly innocuous preparation send your blood pressure spiraling, lethally? Or might a blow-out your liver and land you in the ICU on the impatient waiting list?

The short answer is that most people in decent health should remain quite wary on any of these products. In rare instances, acetaminophen has been linked to sudden liver failure, and ibuprofen occasionally causes gastrointestinal bleeding. In both cases, however, by far the greatest risk is run by people who both drink heavily and take more than the recommended dosages. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is often the best choice

for pain relief, especially if frequent use is necessary. It's gentlest on the body and most effective against fever, and it should be given the first shot at easing arthritis pain. For inflammation, though, *ibuprofen* (Advil) is the remedy of choice. The newest over-the-counter painkiller, naproxen (Aleve) and naproxol (Chiro-Ket, Aleve), should be regarded as fallibles if pain isn't assuaged by more familiar remedies. Naproxen lasts seven or eight hours, which makes it good for persistent pain. Naproxen is recommended for children. Aspirin is a fine first choice for that throbbing head- and for other aches and pains, too, if it works well for you. To forestall the very slight but very dire chance of triggering Reye's syndrome, an often-fatal liver inflammation, it's prudent not to give it to children. Aspirin's side effects—

stomach irritation and bleeding—are seriously addressed by adding antacids (Euflexin) or a coating that delays release until the pill is in the stomach (Ecto-Asp). As if that weren't enough, some brands offer a mixture of remedies—most prominently

some types of Tylenol, which contain both aspirin and acetaminophen. For most of us, what's best is what works. Bug your doctor if you're concerned—and don't be lousy everything you hear in commercials.

	Aspirin	Ibuprofen	Naproxen	Naproxol	Acetaminophen
Best for pain	OK	OK	OK	OK	BEST
Best for fever	OK	OK	OK	BEST	OK
Best for inflammation	NO	NO	NO	BEST	NO
Best for arthritis	NO	NO	OK	BEST	NO
Best for headache	OK	OK	OK	BEST	OK
Best for cold/flu	OK	OK	BEST	NO	OK

Note: BEST denotes best choice when you are advised otherwise. "OK" means OK, "NO" means not OK, "BEST" means best choice.

Schott Happens

AWIT'S TRICK: Just like a rigger, the drunken redneck in front of us when the dark doorman Cabot (Fred Innes) belted a grounder laterally, his words charged the molecules in the air, transforming the innocence of a southern spring day into something dark and dangerous. All my friends and I had wanted was to dip away to old Crockett Park on Mississippi Avenue for the simple, endless pleasures of cheap beer, hot dogs, and Charlotte Orioles baseball—and here we were, seated behind a new league ball connoisseur and the local blower of the KKK. "Look at 'em—bunched down like a monkey!" he drawled, to the raucous delight of his buddies.

Suddenly, my friend Mark dove from his seat and started flailing down the row of faded bouzoukis. "Hey!" he shouted. "Shut up!" "What'd he say?" another one. "He got ya bawled kilted if he don't watch it!" "Just that the ball up?" Mark said again.

For most Americans, except perhaps Marge Schott, whose rants are unscripted and have thankfully gone by the way of warm air-conditioned signs over drinking fountains. But still, Schott happens. And when it does, when bigamy—whether racist, racist, anti-Semitic, or homophobic—rears its ugly head in public, what do you do? Are you obligated to say something? Or should you keep your peace?

After all, in these prickly times, offense often lies in the eye of the beholder. The ball game drunk was an angry

cell, but sometimes it's hard to keep up with the myriad ways we can offend. A middle-aged friend, taken to task for insensitivity using the word Oriental instead of Asian, apologized with, "It was an Occident." Sensitivity is always selective and works on a sliding scale. We demand it for our own group, we're seldom as vigilant for others. We take pride in group identity.

It's a hell on the blackly change you wouldn't understand," we announce defiantly. Still, I can say redneck, cracker, peckerwood, or white trash in referring to my tribe, but don't let anybody else try it.

Why not raise for bigotry? Allow tribal aggression and group grandiosity only in red-light districts—leaky Times Squares for cranks. Or perhaps, in the further location, restaurants should post signs saying, THANK YOU FOR NOT USING THE N WORD. In the meantime, lead by example.

Sometimes grown-ups find a quotable joke or phrase that's gratuitous unless the writer's child runs out a dirty word. We're told the way drinkers use nondrinkers. "Are you ahead—have one? Don't be a party pooper?" Begins looking for buddies can quickly tell if you're one of them.

When you raise a chuckle, a message is sent. Inhibition is contagious.

But when it comes to alienating others, I favor free speech—even badness.

Now suppose the bigot is your boss. Accepting any regular paycheck requires a certain measure of readiness and just kidding. What you can do depends on course,

on your relationship with the boss. If you feel you can bring it up, do so only in strictest confidence and privacy. Don't over-pot the big cheese on the spot, or you'll be treated with the roll of

time—or, more exactly, until such time as he or she can renege your permanent job. And whenever possible, keep the focus on yourself—your own fuck you. If you offer a model of constructive self-assertion, who knows? Consciousness was made to be raised—even a boss's.

Meanwhile, back at the ball game, my other friend approached the drinks bar confrontationally. "Would you please knock it off!" he implored. "See that old guy down there?" he asked, pointing to a gray-haired black man sitting nearby. "He can hear you, and it's just not right." Mumbling resentfully, the mugger served him as in Mark's direction. "You all can go shut up, and I will, too."

Graciously, we'd found common ground. Minutes. It's a beautiful thing—you wouldn't understand it.

POP WISDOM

If Ears Could Talk



In the early 1970s, a few bold physicians began claiming they could tell

whether patients were heart-attack risks just by looking at them. The idea wasn't a shock told of Schott about the racist but a diagnostic device, of all things, the earlobe. Skipped up over subsequent controversies, but ear findings still point up a few ears.

A study that followed high-risk patients for a decade found that those with at least one creased lobe were 50 percent more likely to suffer a cardiac event than smooth-lobed patients. In fact, creased lobes turn out to be better predictors of heart trouble than hypertension, high cholesterol, obesity, or family history.

Studymeister Dr. William Elliott of Chicago's Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center explains that ears, in their way, develop atherosclerosis. As blood vessels clog in the skin, wrinkling the skin, coronary arteries may be passing up as well. Also, earlobe tissue has elasticity with age, falling away, arteries less elastic fibers, too, so they harden. A creasing lobe, then, could signify a struggling heart.

If you have a creased lobe, don't panic. The word on Schott doesn't mean heart failure is imminent. But if you're applying for a health-insurance plan that doesn't over-protect conditions, you might ask yourself: How would I look as a pair of dip-ends?

—TAMARA SEVER



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Presenting the annual Deion Awards for outstanding achievement in sports obnoxiousness

SOMETIMES YOU WANT to kiss even the biggest dogs in sports. Or, in the words of Nick Faldo to soccer-kick victim Greg Norman, just give them big hugs. So it was with the top honorees in the 1996 Deion Awards for the most annoying people in sports—and present members of the Dallas Cowboys. Because not only did they show why the Cowboys are, and always will be, the loudest sports soap opera we have going, but they have also been awarded the first-ever two Deion Most Important, they helped decide where we should stage this year's ceremonies.



Devin and Sanders: America's big boys.

The ESPY awards, after all, are held at Radio City Music Hall. The Oscars have the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Every year, though, since the awards were first named after Andre Agassi and now Deion Sanders, the incident just has been finding the perfect venue. But this year, the Cowboys, bless their hearts, made it easy: room 315, Renaissance Inn, Irving, Texas.

That is where Deion Sanders' onscreen **Michael Irvin**—All-Pro wide receiver, husband, father of two—was picked up by the cops on the night before his birthday. In the room with Irvin were a former teammate, some marijuana, a little cocaine, a few obligatory sex toys, and...two "self-employed models."

What do self-employed models do, you ask?

A lot of hotel work is my guess.

So when the cops come through the door, here is what Michael Irvin tells them so they don't cuff those golden

hands of his: "Can I tell you who I am?"

Well, know who you are, you dope. You're the first winner of a 1996 Deion.

And now, if you would please stay on the stage, we'll like to present a few more awards to some of the other boys.

Here's a Deion for Deion himself, whose whining all season that the devil media in Dallas were making too much of an issue of his 125 million contract while he was doing ad television commercials with the owner, **Jerry Jones**, about how much money he makes. And one for Jones, who bravely announced after Irvin's indictment on two

drug counts that he thinks individual teens should handle their own drug testing. Jerry's Deion comes with the requisite Nike swoosh.

Less talk, another Cowboys star, had to go away for a few games last season when he violated the NFL's drug policy—whatever that happens to be. Don't fumble the Deion, Luce.

And this year, we are even giving a Deion to Cowboys alumn **Barry Martin**, a former Super Bowl hero, also arrested on a drug rap. The shame for Martin is that if he ends up in the big house, they'll have to take his Deion away. With all the jewelry we have to put on the thing, it can be considered a weapon.

Before our self-employed models begin hawking the Cowboys their trappings—and hands off, gayer—here's, the rest of this year's winners

the last seven games of the regular season. The next day Van Eel apologized to everybody, including his shoe company, Ginnback. Everybody that is, except Ginnback.

Finally, there is **Magis Johnson**. When Van Eel showed the ref, there was this wonderful moment on television when Johnson looked at the little woman the way he would a coonade spouse

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boy 30, of course, you know what happened four games later?

Johnson himself got suspended for bumping a ref—the first suspension of his career. Said it made him feel real bad. He turned out to be great at telling the tale, but lousy at walking the walk, even when he was asked just to walk away.

It just doesn't get much better

than this, does it?

Here's a whole locker room full of Deons for the Lakers. We've made them out of that Neel material. We don't want them to get any ideas the next time Mr. Ref is mean to them.

Andy Agnes and Brooke Shields: Before I got too far along, I don't want to forget that those awards started with Andre. And even if the little guy has

cleaned up his act, somewhat, over the years, I still like to acknowledge all the effort he puts in.

But, my God, in the least already. Hell, Cal Ripken's strike is nothing next to this cowardship. I mean, it seems they've been together since before Robin Stremond—Andre's ex—was his mistress.

So a Deon each for Andre and Brooke. They can stick these suckers on top of the wedding cake.

If there ever is a damn cake.

Albert Belle: Is this guy the Cary Grant of baseball or what? At the World Series, he cursed out Hershbie Storm of NBC when she wouldn't leave the Indians' dugout, even though Storm was waiting there with a crew to interview Belle's teammate Ken Griffey Jr.

On Halloween, Belle got into some kind of suburban social vehicle and tried to run down some hoodlums who were throwing eggs at his house. The road was a little slippery that night, so maybe Belle thought the whole thing was a fair fight.

This season, of course, Belle tried to test his pitching skills by swinging a baseball at a Sports Illustrated photographer, causing the photographer's hand.

And Belle likes to say how he's misunderstood.

Right.

Mike Tyson has been better behaved than your 50 have at least two or three members of Tom Clavin's Nebraska football team.

Here's a Deon, Albert. The next time the world gets on your nerves, knock yourself out. Literally.

Manuel Abdul-Rauf: Well, didn't he turn out to be a regular Yonkers-Doodle Dandy? Abdul-Rauf (the basketball star formerly known as Chris Jackson)

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Model: The people's choice.



Schon: Muzzing doesn't become her.



Snowball Man: Chill out, Jella.

caused a national controversy when he decided that he could no longer continue to stand for the national anthem. The big reason he cited was that the American flag is a symbol of both tyranny and oppression. (Under said flag, it should be noted, Abdul-Rauf makes about \$6 million a year.)

Abdul-Rauf converted to Islam five years ago—that's a lot of national anthems ago—and a lot of willows in the bank for those of you keeping score at home. This season, he decided that the Koran didn't want him muzzing. And he said that even if it meant sacrificing his career, that was his stand, muzzing.

The league suspended him for a game, which meant about thirty grand in pay he reconsidered before the next thirty grand and said he would stand, but at prayer, while the anthem was played.

So he gets a D-minus, Oh, you bet he does. And stand tall when I hear it to you, soldier.

Art Model: Got, the fans of the Cleveland Browns never got to say a proper goodbye to Art before he stole the team away from them. So we're not going to grieve Art with his award at the *Kennedy Center* in Irving.

We were eighty thousand at Cleveland Stadium.

We plan to give every one of them a D-plus, too.

A little harder than the average Deion and a little smaller Razer so show.

Stay loose, Art.

Maya Scholtz: She is muzzing up fast to that Lifetime Achievement Award, which has been given only to *Annie Adams* and *Christian Lacroix* (Wherever happened to Mr. Cate, by the way?) And even if you guide this old

catcher's mitt against the curve—other baseball owners—the mill ought to be, well, Scholtz.

But nothing Marge has ever done was quite compared to her actions on this year's opening day. Just a few pitches into the Red-Eye game, veteran National League umpire John McWherry was struck with chest pains. He staggered away from home plate, trying to get off the field. He never made it. McWherry died of a heart attack shortly thereafter. Nothing like it had ever happened on a baseball field before.

Marge could not understand why something like this had happened to her. "I gave this man my life," she said, referring to the way the day had begun in Cincinnati. "Now he's..."

You get the picture. This McWherry had some awe.

Even after Schon was told by the other umpires that McWherry had officially been pronounced dead, she asked the Red's general manager, "Did he die?" No, Marge, it's just some of that scary umpire humor.

Just to show there were no hard feelings, sentimental Marge then sent some scented flowers to the umpire's home in sympathy for McWherry's death. Just the way *Beely Fox* would have done it.

And, it turns out, she wasn't even as mad as a hornet. For by May, Marge was telling ESPN that Hildu—an old favorite of beer-stirred one fans—has just won her for "Well, at least that come from a woman who knows everything there is to know about going too far."

Here's another Deion for the moment, Marge. Stop!

Oh yes, Steve: The Bermuda Triangle is easier to pinpoint

Baseball still doesn't have a commissioner or a collective-bargaining agreement, and it begins this season in weather conditions that seemed more appropriate for *Beats Street* than for what used to be the national pastime.

And what do they do to correct all of that?

Simple. Play connect the dots with the strike zone.

Well, there's a real magic bullet for you.

So, with my compliments, here's a Deion for baseball's Foulies. That is (and they know who they are), low and on the corner.

Wherever low and on the corner happens to be today.

Frank Bruni: He came into his big money season with Mike Tyson to one of many, many heavyweight champions in the world.

And for three seconds, Bruno said as if he had trained for this baby at an Arthur Murray Dance Studio.

This wasn't a tide fight, it was a tugs.

Here's a Deion, mate.

One, two, three, dip.

Lawrence Taylor: With some former Deion winners, the fun just never stops. This year, of Lawrence Taylor was picked up in South Carolina for attempting to buy one hundred dollars' worth of crack from an undercover agent. He posted bond and later asked a reporter the following question: "Is this going to be in the news papers?" No, we're gonna write it straight into the Congressional record.

Here's a Deion, LT, and it's worth at least a hundred bucks.

Don't even think about it.

Rob Ray/Ripstein: He's the guy who

does those "I love you, man" beer commercials. The first two times, it might have been funny, but now it's so annoying that it makes you miss the guy who used to scream for *Corny Eddie*—sort of like the way Little Tony would sometimes miss *Louie Olay*, here's the deal, Rob. We don't love you anymore, man.

But here's a lovely parring gift. Now shut up and get out.

Snowball Man: Every year, it seems that more and more fans think that somehow they are part of the game. During the last week of the regular season, the New York Giants were playing San Diego in a game that had playoff implications for the Chargers. By half time, the game appeared to be over, so a few Giants fans in the upper deck decided it would be a good idea to hose a snowball fight and get the players and coaches on the field. Eventually, they hit the Chargers' equipment manager and knocked him unconscious.

The next week, my paper, the *New York Daily News*, put one of these geniuses, Jeffrey Lange, on page one, and a minor mobster ensued, resulting in his arrest. In his defense, Lange claimed that he was having a snowball fight with other fans in the stands.

Sorry, Jeff. In the eyes of the Deion community, you are guilty until proven innocent. One frozen Deion coming at you.

The new lucky puck on face: Those cutting-edge guys at Fox wanted something that would show up better on television than the top of Terry Bradshaw's head.

So they came up with this puck that glowed blue and left a red streak as it was on its way into the upper corner and attracted more silly hype than Hootie and every single blowfish. I turned on the NHL All Star game and thought they were using Mayday Mouse for a puck.

Here's a Deion, guys. Look! It even lights up.

Art Model: I feel compelled to have another ceremony for Art—in Baltimore, of course.

Just as a bridge against his bearing it out of there down the road.

Because, let's face it, if he lives long enough, he'll screw Baltimore the same way he screwed Cleveland.

One last time, from Brown fans everywhere. Art. Take this Deion and shove it in.

"Güineo is Brazil" by Inez van Lier, Guadalupe, Mexico

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UNCLE SAM'S FLIMFLAM

How the government got into the business of fleecing small investors

IT'S ENTERTAINING WHEN WALL Street fan talkers maneuver the intricate savings of naive folk into shaky investments, but it's downright shocking when the U.S. government engages in similar behavior. Yet that's exactly what's going on in the eerily worded marketing campaign being run by the U.S. Mint, a branch of the Treasury Department.

Since last winter, business papers have been bugging with ads promoting the sale of commemorative coins from the U.S. Mint to mark the Olympics in Atlanta. Anyone who wants to reduce his net worth immediately can do so by investing in this and other mint junk—from coins such as the American Eagle to the gold and platinum much of the stuff is turned into.

"In terms of investment, potential, many of these coins are just garbage," says James DiGeorge, publisher of *Silver & Gold Report*, "and no one's doing anything to stop it."

Why not? No mystery there. The mint makes a handsome profit from marketing these coins. There were some highly critical congressional hearings on the mint's activities last summer, but now, with the whole of the federal budget under attack, no one seems very eager to blow the whistle on the mint for quietly enriching the pockets of America's small savers.

For more than two hundred years, the job of the U.S. Mint has been to produce the coins of the nation. In the 1920s, it began issuing commemorative coins to raise money for various public-works projects, but no efforts were made to spread and ended in 1934. During the early 1950s, the program was revived, and the mint began promoting everything from commemorative coins to col-

lectible "treasures" to its gold pieces in investments suitable for your IRA.

A good deal for the small investor? No way! These coins have proven to be atrocious investments, with—as we'll see in a minute—guaranteed losses built right into them. These are, of course, losses that the mint's advertising blurs, conveniently ignores, even though simple fairness would call for spelling out the risks.

A typical ad running in *The Wall Street Journal* hypes one-ounce gold American Eagle coins as just the thing for an IRA because they "enjoy surpluses" spread between the bid and the ask price. It's true that the bid-ask spread for such coins is narrow—but that's only because the mint produces so many of them. What the ad doesn't tell you is that the price of the coin—roughly \$20 for a "proof" (meaning, one specially prepared and very shiny, the only Eagle you can buy directly from the mint)—represents a 45 percent markup on the price of the gold it actually contains. Says DiGeorge, "If you're lucky, you might find a coin dealer willing to give you \$20 if the coin is at absolutely mint-quality, perfect proof condition," or about 25 percent less than you paid for it.

You can also walk into virtually any large bank in America, for \$25 or so, buy the same one-ounce American Eagle without all the blather about its being a "proof" condition. You can find the resale value of this Eagle quoted in the financial pages—recently, it's been around \$220, or about a 3 percent markup over the price of semi-gold bullion. For a buyer to make a sure profit from 1979 Eagle Indian coins will have to rise by at least 45 percent—which isn't even the most die-hard goldbugs predict will happen anytime soon.

Worse of all, any investor who uses cash from his IRA to buy gold from the mint will get mugged from several directions at once. Just because it's paid up for an American Eagle from the U.S. Mint doesn't mean it can be entered in your IRA at that value.

Under IRA rules, a fund's assets must be "invested in market"—which is to say, valued at their likely resale price—when the portfolio is sold off. Since the mint's selling mark-down on a 1979 coin is a loss of more than 25 percent, the very instant you buy—years later, inside a non-refundable IRA, you don't even get the consolation of a capital loss. Nor do you get to put in more cash to make up for the loss, since annual rollovers limit how much you can invest in irrespective of how poorly the funds are invested thereafter.

The commemorative-coin racket is just as bad. The mint got into the game in 1976, when Congress authorized it to mint and market commemorative coins for virtually any project Congress deemed worthy. Since then, the mint has poured forth an unending torrent of coins—coins commemorating General Colin Powell, Lubawitcher rabbi Menachem Schneerson, Jesse Owens, even a bronze medal honoring Philip Dick, the director of the movie and the man most responsible for this river of "treasure."

The coins don't come right out and say these coins have investment value. That would be absurd. But it bends over backward to suggest that they do. They are described in slick four-color brochures as "art," "heirlooms," and, most misleading, "collectibles," implying that they'll go up in value the way old Mickey Mantle baseball cards have. But look: from the mint keeps streaming out the market like Mickey Mantle's investments in finance, underlining whatever meager scarcity value they might otherwise have.

More than one hapless investor has found that out the hard way. According to coin dealer Harvey Stack's testimony to Congress, the implicit promise of a profit turned out to be a maiming disappointment to an elderly woman who came to his Manhattan shop, dragging a bag of coins she'd bought from the mint beginning in 1975. The purchase price totaled \$2,000, which she'd spent, she said, in order to raise a nest egg for her grandchildren. The market value of her collection, no more than \$2,000.

As a result, the coins' only enduring financial value is the melt-down, or spot, value of the silver and gold bullion from which they're made. The quarter-ounce gold Olympic coin that the mint is asking for may have a spot value of about \$21. DiGeorge estimates that such a coin can be resold for 80¢ at most and will probably drop in value after the Olympic games.

Even director David acknowledges as much. In testimony last summer, he told the congressional committee, "The record is absolutely clear: These are not good investments... We overpay our customers."

So, bottom line? If you somehow feel moved to help Washington balance the budget, then by all means go ahead and grossly overpay for the U.S. Mint's pseudo investment coins and other junk. Just don't assume that the money you sell away will grow over the years, because, almost certainly, it won't. ■



"Lo mejor de la bebida" by Amado Nervosa, Sonora, Mexico

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BROTHER RAT



Revenge is a dish
best served to
family members

THANKS TO THE KACHINSE brothers, the membership card is being treated about on buses, in bars, and in fast salons across the country. If you snitch on your brother if you thought he was the Unabomber? That is a no-brainer. Of course you would, if for no other reason than—even the tropics of all psychopathology to be back into the family—the FBI man is eventually going to show up at your house with a rusty little neutron bomb in a beautiful by-hand-carried Herr Drosselmeier suitcase and you're going to sign for it, and then, in due season or however long it takes you to open the box and empty all the Styrofoam peanuts, it's vips can Dico, Khakosony.

A far better question, one that more seriously tests the tensile strength of the American family, is: Would you contact the FBI and tell them you suspect your brother of being the Unabomber when you know very well that he isn't but you're just racist on beating his balls?

In fact, the FBI received thousands of such calls from siblings falsely implicating siblings, children, family members, parents, parents, family implicating children. All had a similar motive: The simple desire to junk the dam of the accused, perhaps for the sheer perversity of it all—to rack up a nice grade—perhaps to avenge some past offense or slight. Overwhelmingly the most common deliberately erroneous Unabomber accusation arose from spouse-versus-spouse conflict. And, as to often happens in domestic disputes, by the time the authorities would arrive at the home, all was peaceful and serene.

"Oh, he's not the Unabomber, Special Agent. It was all a silly misunderstanding. Everything's fine now," the wife would say, nipping ointment beer and lighting a cigarette from a burner on the stove as her husband glared catatonically at daytime television from his Le-Z-Boy.

When we ask ourselves these kinds of questions—Would you let out your brother if he were a serial and brother? Would you set a ladybug on a bug? Would you let a ladybug on a bug? Would you let a ladybug on a bug?

rather do: George Bush, Mark Brandt, spend a romantic weekend in Phoenix Park with Prince Shamsk and Michael Jackson, do Eternity with Mike Tyson and Tipper Shaker, or spend the final Wildflower Special for Playboy "Girls of the Grand Old Party" picnic?—we are attempting in euphony, to put our selves in the shoes of those who transcribe the evening news.

Most Americans, though, find it difficult to envision their feet into the do-dodgers of the Kachinse. Not surprising. After all, these are men who "abandoned democracy and racism" One can understand, given the status of democracy currently in vogue, building beautifully culled and banded. And one can absolutely understand watching on the brother who does so. But, damn democracy and racism, my God! What happened to these poor souls as children that would have caused them to renounce the two units that are universally recognized as the way to run a nation (swag) is beyond the mind.

I don't know what David Kachinse's problem was that resulted in his performing an eight-by-twenty-five-foot hole dwelling in the Chisholm Desert to say, a one-bedroom apartment on Lake Street Drive. But I think all Theodore needed was better vocational counseling. Notwithstanding the celebrated Luddite manifesto and his piling long trains on sailing rabbits ("Walk as he creep, viny, viny, viny") the suspected Unabomber showed far greater promise as a literary agent than he did as an author. The latter he sent to various editors ("I want to tell in where and how our material will be published and how long it will take to appear in print once we have sent in the manuscript. If the answer is satisfactory, we will finish typing the manuscript and send it to you. If the answer is unsatisfactory we will start building our nest home.") I surely mean compelling than the typical Tim Conner-thin-Talk-to-me-like-a-bird-does-man-to-right

up-your-sleeve misanthrope that seldom receive in advance of a manuscript. I mean, this guy was the real deal.

IN FACT, I SHOULD DISCLOSE THAT the issue of fraternal treachery has a personal resonance for me. I was victimized when I was fifteen years old. I was home, biding my time for my nine-year-old brother, Lobster.

I'm lying on the bed in my room with my girlfriend, Denise, who, having doffed her shirt and bra, is snuggling my crotch as I listen the Seeger's "I Wanna Be Your Dog" on my awesome guitar. Suddenly, the bedroom door swings silently open, and there's Lobster, pawing, open-mouthed, at Denise's bare breasts.

"I'm going to tell Mommy and Daddy," he informs me, solemnly, as if bound by civic duty.

"Is there some way I can dissuade you from doing that?" I ask.

Lobster makes a weak bid. Twenty minutes later, I return, laden with bags of Starbursts, Skittles, Sugar Babies, malted-milk balls, Turkish Taffy, peanut brittle, marshmallows, jelly beans, popcorn, Skittles, Chew Doodles, Cracker Jacks, Dove Bars, Popay, and Yoo-Hoo.

"The only thing I couldn't find was the macadamia cheese. Now, we have a deal—you're not gonna tell, right?"

He tips his lips, and we shake hands.

That night, Lobster parties like a blinged-out, property hoarder and gambling liquid wage in front of the TV until he finally collapses from sheer surfeit.

Well, first thing next morning, the family's up bright and early. And barely have the power's blankets settled into the baskings of our sunny breakfast nook when late Lobster starts singing like a canary. "Mark was in his bedroom with a girl, and she had her shirt off" he pipes with his husky, crackling soprano, hepping in musical pinnacles across the kitchen breakfast.

So much for the sanctity of oral tradition.

In retrospect, of course, I was naive. Relatives routinely screw each other if it's in their interest. To extend Clarence's "Family is the continuation of war by other means."

WHETHER IT'S SPOTLIGHT CLARITY, gump, or the intricacies of geopolitical

maneuver, the news is our biggest focus. The headlines provide us with a kind of public, mythic vocabulary with which we can probe one another's states of mind. And people are invariably more revealing about their deepest fears and most passionate desires when discussing Clinton or Dennis Rodman than they are when asked intimate questions about their own emotional lives.

This is not to say that we aren't occasionally surprised by a sensitive query from a complete stranger. A couple of weeks ago, a woman in front of me on the checkout line at a Home Depot turned to me and, in an effort to make small talk, asked, "Do you find that the looming inevitability of physical deterioration, mental decrepitude, and death inhibits your ability to sustain an erection?"

More typical, though, of one person on the express aisle to another is our "If your brother were the Unabomber, or even, at times, or 'Would you let your seven-year-old fly a plane across the country?' or 'Would you prosecute your personal trainer?'"

Well, here's a cloning command for your consideration.

If your brother had a terrible secret—say, one whose revelation might cost him his job and his marriage—and let's say the secret was that one night your married brother was at Clarence's Tavern and he met this woman at the bar who worked in the telecommunications department at Bear, Stearns and they had a bunch of child and he would have with her and they had sex and they started the farthest once-a-week thing, and soon the woman's boyfriend found out and he was none too divided and one afternoon he called up your brother at the office (he's my brother is an accountant in the music industry) and he threatened to call your brother's wife and tell her all about these weekly trysts and your brother buys that guy's silence by giving him privileged, potentially lucrative information about a client's company, which constitutes not only a betrayal of this client's confidence but a violation of SEC misdeeds-and-prohibitions.

If you could reveal all that in a national magazine, just to get your brother back for something he did when you were fifteen and he was nine, would you do it?

Well, would you?

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TURNED FROM
GREY TO
BLACK, AND
HE LIVED
TO BE 160
YEARS OLD."

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"CNN SCOOPED US ON THE KOKO-THE-TALKING-GORILLA STORY... BUT JANIE GOODALL IS BEATING GROPIN EVERY NIGHT."



Esquire

PLANET of the APERS

Is there anybody in America who is not creating a television network? A report on Oprah envy, cartoon economics, and a nation on the rerun.

BY RANDALL ROTHENBERG

GOT A BIG TV, GOT A REALLY BIG TV, MATE BLACK, PLAY SCREEN, BERRY TWENTY SEVEN inches across to corner. And it came with a Universal Remote, sleek and palm-size, which works my cable box, my VCR, and—of course—my Really Big TV. I settled down on the couch, so I could my couch, and prepared to feast upon a television cornucopia. Life was grand.

Except goddamned Time Warner Cable was messing up my Really Big TV. "Fifty-seven channels and neither" on—trust pop sensation ever rendered. But a solution was at hand: a satellite dish! Pioneer DicoTV Digital picture. Digital sound. One hundred and seventy-five channels. Faster-selling consumer-electronics item in history. I thumbed through a satellite schedule, trembling with anticipation at my new and nearly unlimited choices.

11:00 P.M. FAMILY CHANNEL—The Three Stooges **Click.** The boys are beer-delivering golf nuts. **Click.**

SCI-FI CHANNEL—The Twilight Zone (00) (BW). A telepathic nude girl is the only survivor of a fire. Ann Jillian. **Barbershop** **Click.**

TV FOOD NETWORK—How to Boil Water. **Click.**

Act! One hundred and seventy-five channels and counting. On What's the point of having a really big TV if the only thing you watch are talk shows, reruns, infomercials, kids' Channel waaaa-bies, obscure sporting events, nature documentaries, and current-affairs programs featuring old white men shouting at one another? Where were the five hundred channels of innovative programming whose promise made up the best year ever (147 million units) for television sales in the U.S.—the waned channels that have kept reality big TV's breaking sales records ever since?

I called people in the business. Don't worry, they conceded, the new networks are just around the corner. "We're late a lot for a while, but it became too cumbersome," a spokeswoman for the National Cable Television Association told me. "We topped out at 144." She suggested that I call Susan Applebaum at California's premiere, an acknowledged industry agent. Susan sent me his list of 107 planned wells but told me that the number currently in vogue is 100 new networks.

"At least once a week, someone will come through here with a new network," Jerome H. Donnerstag said. We were sitting in his corner office at the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency where Donnerstag directs national television client buying. He said to tape the proposal on the wall to his left, but the number caught the space, so he rearranged through a file drawer. He found the list he was looking for. On it was a network (Zero Television) that will showcase only new networks.

I looked at the roster. It included twelve entities or forthcoming networks devoted to news—CNN, CNN/Asia (off-financial news), CNN/2 (a joint venture with Sports Illustrated), NBC World Channel, Fox News's WBNS, NewsWorld International, Global Village Network, CNBC, NewsTalk Television, MSNBC (the joint venture between NBC and Microsoft that premieres on July 10), and news channels associated by ABC and Fox Broadcasting. All of them, as far as I could tell, were planning to run talk shows or current-affairs programs featuring old white men shouting at one another.

Click. There were six networks devoted to health, with names like America's Health Network, Fitness Interactive, the Air-Arm Network, the Recovery Network. Fit TV, and Jones Health Network. Cuzin to their face would be talk shows.

Click. There were six networks set aside for transportation: Automotive Television, the Auto Channel, Speedvision, the Air & Space Network, Wingspan, and Thru. Reruns, obscure sporting events, and documentaries were high on their schedules.

Click. There were even four networks programmed mostly

with reruns: Game Show Network, Nick at Nite's TV Land, Classic Sports Network, and the Soap Channel.

Click. Two hundred networks and nothing on "Two hundred networks! How many more compelling ideas are there?" Bonnie Worth, a top television consultant, asked. Stranded somewhere between confusion and incomprehension, she was answering at me over the phone, which is significant because Worth makes a living helping new networks get started. "In these matter plus somewhere," she yelled, "to put something into the water to turn us into video robots and give us three more hours a day to watch TV!"

Good question. I left him to explore. Somewhere between Soylia (aka Hollywood) and Cherylupa (Broadstreet Row, at New York's Sixth Avenue, used to be known), I found out why everything you believe about television—specifically, that it's got to employ originality to attract viewers and ratings and profit—is wrong. And it will continue to be wrong even as the "television universe" (as those in the business cynically call it) expands from five hundred channels to a million channels and more.

TUESDAY, MAY 14

8:00 A.M. AMERICA'S TALKING—Infomercials.

Click. **EI**—Infomercials.

Click. **FAMILY CHANNEL**—Infomercials.

Click. **TV FOOD NETWORK**—How to Boil Water. **Click.**

The WB Television Network, one of the two broadcast nets to debut in 1995, seemed an appropriate first stop. Critic Marvin Kimmelman had declared its first five telecasts "village idiots."

As I sat across from Gareth Ancier, the network's programming chief, he found me with a look—wide-eyed dread, embellished with concentric rings around the eyes—that I'd last seen on Will E. Coyote in the split second before he played off a cliff in a Road Runner episode. Which seemed fitting, considering that those cartoons were produced not far from the Warner Bros. back lot where we were sitting.

"I want to ask this question without an edge," I said. "I don't want to make fun of people." "No, it's okay," Ancier said, reading himself. "Ask." "Why," I said. "Is so much TV programming so bad? Why are the firms so furious? You look at Seinfeld versus *Real* [a WB Sunday-night success], and there's a vast difference there."

He relayed a body that seemed chronically tense and let out a nervous laugh of relief. "Because there aren't that many talented people to make programs."

"That's it?" "Pretty close. People who can do about twenty-two, twenty-four, twenty-six episodes well, write it, produce it, cast it—it's a huge enterprise to do that."

I was predisposed to trust Ancier. At thirty-eight, he is the only person in history to have served as the inaugural programming supervisor of two new broadcast networks, having fulfilled that role initially when Fox opened for business in the late eighties. He had survived a Hollywood

runner mill that tried to undermine him. (For the record, the story that he passed out at the Ivy from a hangover, told by Barry Diller and Rupert Murdoch, is only half true. He did pass out, he says, but it was from the heat, and Diller, a notorious son of a bitch, to be sure, wasn't even there.) Indeed, Ancier's professional ascent was validated by his creation and management of Nickelodeon's wildly successful syndicated talk show, a production that has earned him both notoriety and the unique distinction of simultaneously holding down two jobs—network programming and executive producer—for two companies (Time Warner and Sony) that otherwise compete with each other.

Blaming the talent mill didn't explain, Kirk, television's mirthless situation: comedy structured around a single parent household and featuring the kinds of neosemitism that TV kinds like grifters. The WB's Sunday-evening sitcom stars Kirk. Caron—*who was once the world's toothy, and right-topped boy star of Growing Pains as a weevil, toothy, and right-topped young man who cherishes his three siblings after the death of their parents and manages to support them on a cartoonist's income in a spacious Greenwich Village apartment. While during the gorgeous and student nose, deer. Sample episode: "Kirk and Russell climb into a hospital to have their teeth removed."*

"That's why are the firms so repetitive?" I asked.

"Look—this is a different issue," Ancier responded. "Part of it is that people like a certain amount of familiarity in their television. They like certain comfort levels."

There it was: the rape defense. Hollywood has long rationalized the persistence of redundant programming by arguing that the audience wants it. Really. One successful TV producer, a true intellectual with a literary background, pondered my question and coughed a back at me. "When you ask why so much television is so bad, that assumes the goal of TV is to provide the same kind of entertainment and escape the masses provide," he said. "But its real intended role is to fulfill a kind of emotional need that's quite different from going to the movies. When you go to the theater, you're going to a spectacle for an Aristotelian experience—for a catharsis. Television is different. The television experience is embodied by the fact that you don't go out. It's as if a hole is cut in your living-room wall and you see through a

window into the house next door. Television is supposed to make you comfortable in your isolation. To make a solitary people feel they are part of something larger."

Scholars, interestingly, agree. Postmodernists have created an academic industry around the notion that television provides a "national narrative" for a socialized populace devoid of heroes, moral touchstones, and mythology. In this construct, Les Thompson +

Marko Thomas + Athens (single girl) do much on the city looking for love. Dr. Murdoch Men + The Regime + the Cloning (last year's hottest adversary while asking passage home). And service of Soomoo and his King (Lifeline, Saturdays at 2:00 P.M. and Sundays at midnight) and Pope (Cartoon Network, Monday through Thursday at 7:30 A.M. and 9:30 A.M.) are both different from the films of Achilles' story that the ancient Greeks retold while sitting around the agora. They remind us of—and help us reach our children about the shared experience of American men. *Be strong to the faith, since I am a seagull.*

The problem with that explanation is it's wrong. If the audience were clamoring for druck, the ratings for druck would be higher. McDonald's hamburgers may wreak havoc with the national trust, but there's no arguing with its billion served. No one is arguing for reruns, no one is clamoring for Kirk!

The WB network averages a rating of 14—that means a 1 million homes, about one-eighth of what Seinfeld draws. Kirk's reruns fare far worse, most of them registering barely a single rating point.

And it's getting worse. Overall television viewership remains where it's been for decades—about seven hours per day in the average household.



DÉJÀ VIEWING

One of the guiding principles behind the rampant creation of new television channels is that even the most lame reruns can produce an audience—witness the return of *Arrested Development* to Nick at Nite's TV Land—and that talk, or at least a talk show, is cheap. In the future, however, there will be no guests to book, because everyone will be a host. Here's a sampling of some current and forthcoming networks. Rappy channeling.



For the chance to play in the human round, would you rather watch old episodes of *Star Trek* with Gene Siskel or *The Joe Rogan with Nick McLean*?



A chance to improve your self-defense skills, watch *Steven Seagal* interviews, and see old martial-arts movies—*Jackie Chan: The Early Years*



Can't get your doctor to return a call? Watch medical shows on *And the Winner Is* or *And the Winner Is*. Could save time with the *Gold Channel*.



Requiem for the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh programming you can imagine, including *The Late Late Show* with Ray Ryan. Ed McMahon, call your agent.



Twenty-four hours of interactive talk shows and a sprinkling of reruns—the best of *Flash Duddah*, an acronym I never there was one.

Women, men, and kids are watching less than ever before. Yet new networks proliferate. I had to look elsewhere for an explanation.

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 15
2:00 P.M. ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT—McCloud.**

Critica drama.

Critic.

TNT—CHIPS. Crime drama.

Critic.

TV FOOD NETWORK—How to Sell Water.

Critic.

"It's very hard to convince somebody to start a new network," Reese Schonfeld was telling me. "It's always better to have somebody come to you and say, 'Gee, do you think such and such will work?'"

We were broadcasting at Michael's, a power bureau for New York's media. Schonfeld, his face and blazer a labyrinth of creases, narrowed his eyes, bared his teeth in a grin, and leaned close to explain in a confidential near-whisper why he preferred not to be called an "inventor" of new television networks. "Inventor is the word I like."

It wasn't hard to imagine Reese playing *Arnold* Rand's Howard Kohn. He was, after all, the man who rescued a drunk Ted Turner at a 1977 cable-TV convention and proposed an all-news network—and who three years later finally launched CNN for Turner, stuffed it with kids and network has-beens called "Reese's Picks," and fought and bled with Turner over personnel and money and news values. Tall, fed-faced, personable, he then stomped over to Long Island to start one of the nation's first local news cable channels. Not long before our talk, he had broken with his partners in his most recent start-up, Television Food Network.

I asked him his strategy.

"You've got goals like my ass," he said. "My whole career has been, I've referred, transferring various sections of the newspaper to television. Starting out with the front page, CNN. Next thing was the metro pages. That was News

n on Long Island. Then I did the food pages—TV Food. My next channel is also going to be a newspaper page—a health network. This is the best idea I've had, in a way."

"But there are going to be a lot of health networks," I protested. "How can any one be original enough to profit when the universe is becoming so fragmented?"

"You're not thinking like an entrepreneur," Reese chided. "You're going to drive saying, 'There isn't any way.' The entrepreneur says, 'This is a whole new world. What's the way? How can I convert that?'"

"Clay, how?"

And that was when he explained the Grand Theory of Cable Television to me. Like the water on his TV Food Network's how-to show, it boiled down to this: Nothing.

Cable, I learned from Reese Schonfeld, is predicated on the assumption that you can make money without an audience.

"You see," he told me, "it's the number of channels. When I started CNN, there were only about eighteen channels available, on average, to a viewer. Then there were thirty-six channels, and then fifty-four, and now it's something like seventy-two." As better wiring, digitization, and signal compression open up more space—a Turner Broadcasting study shows that the average cable customer has had ten more channels available to him over the past two years alone—there's more room for new networks. According to custom, cable operators pay the networks they carry for the privilege of carrying them—as much as fifty cents per subscriber per month for established networks like ESPN and CNN, as little as ten cents for a fledgling with Obama connections or as low as fifteen million of the hundred million or so "television households" that you can bring a network to profit, regardless of whether anyone wants to—of programming costs are largely local, usually through the use of sitcom, talk shows, obscure sporting events, and cheap documentaries.

It's this premise that's brought entrepreneurs with access to a few failed businesses and some worn videotapes trundling to the tough, haphazard up to a dime here, a dime there from the twenty bucks a month you pay for

cable. The America West Network—"classic westerns, films and TV shows" is how it describes itself in *Broadcasting & Cable* magazine—is one example. Children's Cable Network—"original and recycled programming"—is another. I could go on. Two hundred times, I could go on.

Not that cable operators, who as a whole are among America's most infamously voracious classes, necessarily want to pay for more networks that they learned a long time ago that offering new channels provides an automatic prescription for rate increases. "When I first started CNN," Schonfeld recounted, "we went to see a company in one of the 'Renaissance' markets. They had room for us, but they were not gonna put us on 1 and 'Why not?' They said, 'Look, we're going for a rate increase.' We went to be able to fill the city control. You give us the rate increase and you'll get CNN."

Today, such basic blackmail is not even necessary. The recently passed Telecommunications Act gives cable operators a virtually free hand in making rates. Already this year, the nation's two largest cable operators, Time Warner and Comcast, and Time Warner, have bought changes to protect or more across the map. It's only to keep their customers from looking to satellite services that cable operators continue to offer new networks every time they lift rates. "When a customer comes back and complains, 'You just raised my rate a buck a month,'" Schonfeld explained, "the cable operator can say, 'Look, but we gave you the Huxley Channel, we gave you TV Food Network, and we added the Home de Garden network.' If you pay ten cents each, you still get seventy cents' profit per subscriber."

Washington has added to the frenzy by requiring cable operators to offer compensation to over-the-air stations whose signals they transmit. The most powerful station groups—usually, the three original broadcast networks and Fox, with their two hundred-plus affiliates each—agreed to throw up new cable networks devoted to talk shows (NBC's *Antenna's Talking*), reruns (Fox's *DeV*), and obscure sporting events (ABC's *ESPN2*).

It gets even more intricate. These new networks, however small, real viewers away from independent broad-

cast stations. And as they do, they draw the attention of advertisers. "That's the basic trend we're all feeling off the coast of the broadcast audience share," says Roger Werner, a cofounder of *Speedvision*, one of the six transportation networks, and of *Outdoor Life*, one of three or four networks devoted to movie and puppets.

With money coming from both subscriber fees and advertising, these cable networks can outbid the struggling local broadcast stations for the reruns and old movies that used to fill the broadcasters' time from a 6:00 p.m. until midnight. With audiences shrinking, advertisers fleeing, and programming disappearing, the owners of these stations have no choice but to ally themselves with nearby broadcast networks—hard to do if ABC, NBC, CBS, and Fox already have affiliates for Philadelphia—to create a new network.

Which is what Warner Media, a station owner, did when it partnered with Warner Bros. to create the WB network, and what a former book maker named Chris Cofa did when it banded seven stations in Paramount to form the UPN network. Herbert Siegel, the once-powerful head of Chris-Cofa, complained that he had no choice but to start UPN. "This is the reason we program talk shows, why there's such a glut of shit," he said of the new competition that forced him to give up his independence, according to a friend in the business. "It's all we can afford."

In other words, good begins new networks begins four begins new networks.

"That's what I have about all this," Schonfeld said, gleaning, as I noted from the sheer befuddlement of the economic lesson. "It just makes everything that much more valuable."

His inference to value dispensed my daydream—because, I knew, prosperity is proving chaotic.

Sure, networks are in financial vogue these days, what with Disney paying \$1 billion for ABC and the early cable networks—the ones the video cognoscenti sneered at when they debuted in the late seventies and early eighties—are returning your profits to their owners (ESPN, which cost ABC \$10 million for its majority share, and in which the Hearst Corporation, *Flagship's* owner, has a minority stake,

generates about \$50 million in postage earnings these days, estimates Roger Warner, its former president.) But the networks aren't making money, and some are losing big.

New cable networks, it turns out, are no longer skimming pennies off your monthly bill. The TV Food Network had to offer itself up free for ten years to operators for carriage into your home. That's nothing compared with an offer Rupert Murdoch made to cable in May: Take his new all-news network and he'll pay you dollars per subscriber. Meanwhile, on the broadcast side, the WB network lost \$66 million last year, while UPN dropped \$90 million. And let us not forget a billion fewer. Comsatcom Inc., conveniently overlooked in the euphoria of billion-dollar buy-outs and standard Wall Street wackiness: If your audience isn't growing and new competitors are continually encroaching, you cannot raise your prices and you will start losing market share. And if you cannot raise your prices and you cannot lose share, you will eventually go out of business.

Did someone repeat the laws of supply and demand while I was channel-surfing?

There must be another explanation for these propagating networks.

**THURSDAY, MAY 19
7:00 P.M. LIFETIME: The Conjuriah (GC).**
Conjuriah, Van Dyke is circumstantially linked to a murder.
Click.
THE NASHVILLE NETWORK—The Duke of Hazzard, Conjuriah. Boscawene Boscawene's deputy after looking at pecker.
Click.
TV FOOD NETWORK—How to Boil Water.
Click.

It was the Conglomerator who led me to my answer.

The Conglomerator is a wise man, his wisdom exemplified by complete rejection of self-aggrandizement. Although he owns stations, networks, and programs, Wall Street pays little attention to his work, and the New Yorker will never be allowed to profile him. On the condition that I protect his privacy, he was willing to reveal to me the deepest television secret of his TV. The producer said it this way:

"Programs, more than any other commodity, are non-perishable assets," the Conglomerator told me. "But they have when only inasmuch as you can get value out of them. And for that, you need exhibition. And you'll need your own exhibitor venue because the other guy will be closed off to you."

It came back to the cycle: networks beguiling networks. The virtual absence of federal antitrust enforcement against duopolists has freed their own products and the dense law web of long-standing laws that forbade the broadcast web to own their own entertainment programming have prompted networks across the spectrum to fill their own space with their own material.

"The studios are looking at a situation where access may be forfeited to them. They're scared to death, and rightly so," the Conglomerator said. "And so they're starting their own networks."

He ran down the list for me. USA Network was started by MCA and Viacom to guarantee an outlet for their studios' vast stable of TV dramas. They then owned the Sci-Fi

Channel, not to satisfy consumer demand for more science-fiction programming, but because they wanted a place to park reruns of *Quantum Leap* and *The Six Million Dollar Man*. Game Show Network is a Sony venture, not because Aunt Gertrude can't live without Jeopardy! but because Sony's Columbia Pictures division has a library filled with *Gunsmoke* and *The Price Is Right*. Other studios are either selling out to network owners—as MGM and Hanna-Barbera did to Turner—or buying networks, as Disney did ABC.

It gives you enormous flexibility to pursue your material," the Conglomerator said emphatically (for he had done the same thing). "That's what this is all about: having enough opportunities after you've spent the money on the first use of the program, which doesn't make money, to make money on those back-end returns."

The entertainment industry has even developed a terminology to describe this new path to profits. It's called "repurposing inventory." And *anyone's* got inventory? Turner's got cartoons for his Cartoon Network and MGM movies for his Turner Classic Movies. Rupert Murdoch's got old Fox films for his new FOX network and X-Files reruns for FX. Even NBC and ABC have inventory; their names are Tom Brinkow and Peter Jennings, and plans have already been disclosed to repurpose these anchors and other news personalities for the coming TV networks.

"Television is the ultimate recession," a CNN executive told me. "Nothing ever gets wasted."

"But that is a crazy scheme," I argued to the Conglomerator as he disparagingly related the new venetian of his business. "Why would the studio risk carrying their own shows by intentionally running bad, old shows that don't attract viewers, rather than spreading their expense as far as possible in search of the best original material?"

The Conglomerator laughed at my naiveté. "Because that's a phony argument. This ideologic notion that there are perfect programs to be found just isn't true. You can make a good statistical case that you've got as good a chance of finding a profit that will sell well as you do of finding a profit by playing the unknown as a whole."

At first, I was reluctant to accept the Conglomerator's chilling vision of the new world of entertainment. When we're living in another "golden age" of television, as declared by Time magazine and exemplified by NYPD Blue and ER? Then I looked at the staggering volume of programming that networks new and old are extending and realized that these were just seed grains in a Goliath Desert filled with Tropicana vehicles.

"In the states and the seventies, the name of the game was to try to program a blockbuster and draw as much audience as possible to your network," the head of one L.A.'s most successful production companies explained. "Now your role is to protect your share at all costs. This has eroded risk taking and creativity to a degree that hasn't been known for years and years in the business. It's even more of a message factory than it was in the past."

He and other producers complain that they are not even in the production business anymore. Their job is to facilitate new networks at the lowest possible cost. The operating principle, J. Walter Thompson's Jerry Dommon told me, is "if there's going to be a crisis, at least let it be in us."

"It's a shelf-space strategy," Dommon explained. "Just like General Mills creating two new cereals for the supermarkets. You may lose your existing brands, but at least you

protect your total market share. And it keeps Kellogg's and Post from getting up there."

Superstition? Now I understand the proliferation of look-alike channels. After all, there's no real choice among the hundreds of derisive, not when Procter & Gamble and Unilever have filled up the shelves with scores of their own brands. Why should television be any different?

That was a lesson the media industry learned hard in the early eighties, when ABC and Westinghouse closed the Saturday News Channel, convinced that there was no future in all-news channels. A few years later, after CNN had turned in to one of television's most successful ventures and had substantially drawn viewers and advertisers away from the mainstream network news programs, the media giant announced that it would never happen again.

So it is, when Time Warner's HBO unit launched a network devoted to comedy, Viacom—furious that the new web would draw the same adolescent audience that had been glued to MTV's music videos—hastily slammed together plans for a competing network. The parking conflict between Comedy Channel and MTV—which finally forced the two to merge into Comedy Central—led to unexpected expenditures that one estimate reached just at \$100 million. "You are someone move into an area that you have, you go to fight back, even if it means losing," the executive said.

Which is why there are going to be as many transportation networks and six health networks and twelve news networks. "Competition doesn't consist of being different from your competition but of being the same," Andrew Ellsberg, a professor at London's South Bank University and one of the world's leading experts on brand marketing, told me. "Everybody has large, small, and small. Some with television. Are they going to do anything radically different? Of course not. If they do, they'll fail."

Of course, you've got to be big to play in this game—the more so because technology is promising to make the shelf life longer than the five-hour channel we've been watching. Microsoft executives predict that it will be only three to five years before real-time, interactive video can be

delivered straight to people's dishdishes via computer. At that point, a million networks—a billion networks—is within programmer's reach. Only those with the resources to cover that shelf now—with talk shows, action, infomercials, 24/7 child news-bots, obscure sporting events, documentaries, current-affairs programs focusing old where news showing at one another, with whatever inventory they might have on hand to no purpose—will be able to survive when some network finally calls the death of television. The fledgling Web sites started recently by such conservative TV networks as CNN and NBC are steps in this direction, designed to reach into consumers' brains brand names that will survive the transition from one medium to another.

"That's going to happen," said Tom Hagen, the president of NBC's cable division and the architect of thirteen networks—all of them using repurposed television from the company's news division—that NBC has created around the world in less than a decade. "So if you don't start the process now, one day you'll find out you're not in the game."

A million channels and nothing on? Could it be? I called the Conglomerator, who calmly told me, "Yes, it could. And it would." "Imagine a world where a company like Disney controls ABC, 60 percent of ESPN, important cable portions, and then owns in 30 percent, so percent of the country," he said. "Now imagine that situation matched by Time Warner, Turner, Viacom, Disney, News Corp., MCA, TCI, and NBC." "Similar as you believe in diversity, it's a loss."

I had to calm my nerves, so I went to the kitchen to make a cup of tea. I put on the kettle to boil some water. Horrifyingly, I knew how it

"IT'S NOT ABOUT CREATING A QUALITY PRIME-TIME LINEUP FOR PRIMATES; IT'S ABOUT SHELF SPACE, AND IF I CAN GET THE CABLE OPERATORS TO CARRY OUR NEW SIMIAN SPORTS NETWORK IN EVERY ZOO IN THE COUNTRY—AT TEN CENTS A SUBSCRIBER, THAT'S NOT EXACTLY CHIMP CHANGE."



The String Theory

What happens when all of a man's intelligence and athleticism is focused on placing a fuzzy yellow ball where his opponent is not? An obsessive inquiry¹ into the physics and metaphysics of tennis.

By David Foster Wallace

¹ With footnotes.

Michael Joyce, left, serves up golden moments.

WHEN MICHAEL T. JOYCE OF LOS ANGELES serves, when he tosses the ball and his face tries to track it, it looks like he's smiling, but he's not really smiling—his face's circumoral muscles are straining with the rest of his body to reach the ball at the top of the toss's rise. He wants to be fully extended and slightly out in front of time—he wants to be able to hit emphatically down on the ball, to generate enough pace to avoid an ambitious return from his opponent. Right now, it's noon, Saturday, July 30, 1995, on the Stadium Court of the Stade Jarry tennis complex in Montreal. It's the first of the qualifying rounds for the Canadian Open, one of the major stops on the ATP's "hard-court circuit,"² which starts right after Wimbledon and finishes at N.Y.C.'s U.S. Open. The tossed ball rises and arcs for a second to hang, waiting, cooperating, as balls always seem to do for great players. The opponent, a Canadian college star named Dan Peckus, is a very good tennis player. Michael Joyce, on the other hand, is a would-be tennis player. In 1993, he was the top-ranked junior in the United States and a finalist at Junior Wimbledon³; he's now in his fourth year on the ATP Tour, and is as of this day the seventy-ninth best tennis player on planet earth.

A tacit rhetorical assumption here is that you have very probably never heard of Michael Joyce of Brentwood, L.A. Nor of Tommy Ho of Florida. Nor of Vince Spadla nor Jonathan Stark nor Robbie Weiss nor Steve Beyron—all American men in their twenties, all ranked in the world's top one hundred at one

¹ Covering Washington, D.C., Montreal, Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, New Haven, and Long Island, this is possibly the most grueling part of the yearly ATP Tour (in the erstwhile Association of Tennis Professionals Tour is now officially known), with three-digit temperatures and the constant sounds of clattering like Moroccan belfries and everyone wearing a hat and even the spectators carrying sweat towels.

² Joyce lost that final to Thomas Enqvist, now ranked as the ATP's top twenty and a potential superstar and in high-profile attendance here in Montreal.



jumped from 14th to 52nd after Wimbledon 1995, where he beat Andre Agassi (ranked 1st in the world) and reached the round of 16.

The quaker comes in to professional tennis sort of what AAA baseball is to the major leagues. Somebody playing the quaker in Montreal is an underbelly world-class tennis player, but he's not quite at the level where the serious TV and money are. In the main draw of the du Maurier Champions Tour, a first-round loser will earn \$5,400, and a second-round loser \$2,900. In the Montreal quakes, a player will receive \$250 for losing in the second round and an extra \$500 for losing in the first. This might not be so bad if a lot of the earnings for the quakes didn't flow through thousands of miles to get here. Plus, there's the matter of supporting themselves in Montreal. The tournament pays the hotel and meal expenses of players in the main draw but not those in the quakes. The arena survivors of the quakes, however, will get their hotel expenses retroactively picked up by the tournament. So there's neither a lot of money—some of the players in the quakes are literally playing for their supper—or for the money to make either home or to this one of the next quaker.

You could think of Michael Joyce's career as now kind of on the cusp between the majors and AAA ball. He still isn't quite for some tournaments, but more and more often he gets sought into the main draw. The move from quaker to main-draw player is a huge boost, both financially and psychologically, but it's still a couple of places away from true fame and fortune. The main draw's 64 or 128 players are all money by the supporting cast for the stars we see in televised finals. But they are also the pool from which superstars are drawn. McEnroe, Sampras, and even Agassi had to play quakers at the start of their careers, and Sampras spent a couple of years losing in the early rounds of the majors before he suddenly erupted in the early seasons and started beating everybody.

Still, even most main draw players are obscure and unknown. An example is Jakob Hlasek.¹¹ A Czech who is working out with Mike Rose on one of the practice courts that morning when I first arrive at Stude Jarry. I notice them and go over to watch only because Hlasek and Rose are so beautiful to me at this point. I have no idea who they are. They are practicing ground strokes down the line—Rose's forehand and Hlasek's backhand—each ball placed like a straight and within centimeters of the corner, the players sweating with the compact soundlessness I've since come to recognize as peace when they're working out. The suggestion is of a very powerful engine in low gear. Jakob Hlasek

is six foot two and built like a halfback, his blond hair in a short square Eastern European cut, with sex eyes and cheekbones out to lure. He looks like either a Nipmunk or a bighead in hell and seems in general just way too scary even to try to talk to. His backhand is a one-hander, rather like Ivan Lendl's, and watching him practice it is like watching a giant arachnid casually do something. Here's having to remember to blink. There are a million little ways you can tell that somebody's a great player—details in his posture, in the way he bounces the ball with his racket head to pick it up, in the way he twists the racket casually while waiting for the ball. Hlasek wears a plain gray T-shirt and some kind of very white European shorts. It's midmorning and already at least 90 degrees, and he isn't sweating. Hlasek turned pro in 1985, six years later had one year in the top ten, and for the last few years has been ranked in the sixties and seventies, getting straight into the main draw of all the tournaments and usually losing in the first couple of rounds. Watching Hlasek practice is probably the first time I really realize how low good these professionals are, because even just looking around, Hlasek is the most impressive women player I've ever seen.¹² I'll be surprised if anybody reaching this article has ever heard of Jakob Hlasek. By the distorted standards of TV's obsession with Grand Slam finals and the world's top five, Hlasek is merely an also ran. But last year, he made \$100,000 on the tour (that's just in prize money, not counting exhibitions and endorsement contracts), and his career earnings are more than \$4 million, and it turns out his home base was for a time Monte Carlo, where lots of European players with tax issues and low living

MICHAEL JOYCE, TWENTY-TWO, IS LIVED IN THE AFF of New Tiger Woods as five days and six pounds, but in person, he's more like five feet nine. On the Stadium Court, he looks compact and stocky. The quacker way to describe him would be to say that he looks like a young and slightly half David Caruso. He is fair-skinned and has reddish hair and the kind of patchy yellow pubic growth of somebody who isn't quite old enough yet to grow real facial hair. When he plays in the heat, he wears a lot of little white shirts

¹¹ Joyce is even more impressive, but I didn't see Joyce yet. And I regret it more because I saw Joyce, and Agassi is such an interesting character. I regret: After the match was over, I only understood why Christian Hanson looks gay and stayed on his descent from Paris. A person can see, sometimes in reverse in the picture.

¹² During his one day early career practice session, he serves the ball back and forth with boys play shirts that look for all the world like men's

Joyce's on-court expression is the same one you see on working surgeons or jewelers.

clothes and uses tennis rackets and in need to do so. His face is chubbily full, and though it isn't freckled, it somehow looks like it ought to be freckled. A lot of professional tennis players look like lifeguards—with that kind of concrete sun that looks like it's penetrated to the subdermal layer and will be retained to the grave—but Joyce's fair skin doesn't tan or even burn, though he does get red in the face when he plays, from effort.¹³ His current expression is given without being unpleasant; it communicates the sense that Joyce's mission on-court have become very narrow and focused and intense—like the same placidly grim expression you see on, say, working surgeons or jewelers. On the Stadium Court, Joyce seems boyish and extremely adult at the same time. And in contrast to his Canadian opponent, who has the varied good looks and Popsicle smile of the stereotypical tennis player, Joyce looks usually not out there playing the sweats through his shirt.¹⁴ He's flushed, whoops for himself after a long point. He wears little white shirts on both

hands. His favorite practice T-shirt has pink. THE THEORY BEHIND IT IN THE end, he laughs a bit when he practices. You can tell just by looking at him on them that he really likes to eat.

If you're playing only casually it is probably hard to understand how physically demanding early tennis really is. Realizing that these pros are more one another from end of the contemporary line because in their early years as well as that they hardly ever and a person just by looking an national even might help their imagination. A close hand-drawn match is probably impossible to go in during a couple of hours of full-time baseball, but it is in hitting tennis backhand.

Something else you don't get a good sense of on television. Tennis is a very money game. On ESPN or whatever when you see a player with one to the ball they also a point and repeat a word and quickly say his arm and head off and then the set went back to the brother, behind him just west of the one the sweat-drenched a ball or a moderate power or a shot because most in running down the middle of the player's arm in such of one that is getting off over his hand and making the racket slippery. Eye

ides, but it turns out they're mostly prophylactic.

It's up to Joyce he broken Andre's serve once and is up 5-1 in the first set and recovering. Andre is in the multi-branded clothes of somebody without an endorsement contract. He's well over six feet tall, and, as with many large college stars, his game is built around his serve.¹⁵ With the score at 5-2, his last serve is in and it's a two-hander and hard to judge effectively with, but Joyce hangs plenty effectively and sends the ball back down the line to the Canadian's forehand, deep in the court and with such that pace that Andre has to maneuver a little and backpedal to get set up—clearly he's used to playing guys for whom his attempts out would be an outright act or at least produce such a weak return that he could move up easily and put the ball away—and Andre now sends the ball back up the line, high over the net, lacy with topspin—not all that bad a shot, considering the fierceness of the return, and a topspin shot that'd back most sane players up and put them on the defensive, but Michael Joyce, whose level of tennis is such that he serves in on balls far past anyone and has them on the run,¹⁶ moves in and takes the ball into the line and into a backhand cross so tightly angled that nobody else could get to it. This is kind of a typical Joyce-Andre point. The match is

like in the middle North American summer games, players move through that their early on and sometimes don't their shirts. And they look somewhat nervous of water-spraying misting. I thought I was not doing things in fact, watching matches as players seemed to grow into one of those shiny ball-bat and sweat-soaked men change. But Michael Joyce confirmed it. Two-grade tennis players seem to have reduced a needed it, again the does not drop absorption of water and to transformation into water. (John player I spoke with confirmed by the way that Grandpa and All-Star and Rose and all those prizey sports stars are mostly believe that this and can in this and make like of daily 100 or so to the pros. The players who don't usually don't need to be players who had on downwind deals with some prizey-sports-shirt manufacturer. But I probably also in last one such prizey-sports-shirt as he tested prizey-sports-shirts and replacing them with good old white t-shirts.)

¹⁴ The offer you are the harder you can serve (get a guarantee and figure it out) but the less able to head and receive a return you are. Tall guys tend to be serve and volleyers, they they love and fear by their serve. Bill Tilden, Stan Smith, Arthur Ashe, Roscoe Tanner, and Boris Becker were all tall guys with serve-dependent games. And so on.

¹⁵ This is a good thing to have to do when the ball is high. If we can see you're playing Lyle, Lyle or another ball or something, imagine the harder his power of all his own coming at you is changing, and you not standing and waiting in your back is down but actually of your own. But will running forward toward the baseline then trying not just to catch it in a big place but to make it back and reverse to the baseline and send it into place. It's highly specific and very far away—this means that

Agnes, who is recovery-fee, is kind of Michael Joyce's hero. Just the week before this month, at the Legg Mason Tennis Classic in Washington, he was seen here that had played vomiting on court and dislodging all over the ball. Agnes beat Joyce in the third round of the main draw, 6-3, 6-2. Every once in a while now, Joyce will look over at his coach seat to see if the player-puppet scenes of the Grandstand and give and say something like, "Agnes! I have lifted on this shot." Joyce's coach will adjust the set of his sunglasses and not say anything—coaches are forbidden to say anything to their players during a match. Joyce's coach, Sam Arrighi,²⁹ a protégé of Pancho González's, is based in Las Vegas, which is also Agnes's hometown, and Joyce has several friends from flowers in Las Vegas at Agnes's request to present with him and is apparently regarded by Agnes as a friend and post—these are facts Michael Joyce will mention with as much pride as he estimates in speaking of victories and world service.

There are differences between Agassi's and Joyce's games, however. Though Joyce and Agassi both use the western forehand grip and two-handed backhand that are distinctive of topspinners, Joyce's ground strokes are very flat—in, garden, passing low over the net, driven rather than heaved—because the actual motion of his strokes is so levelly horizontal. Joyce's balls actually look more like Jovani Corcoran's balls than like Agassi's.²⁰ Some of Joyce's

[illegible][illegible]

ground strokes look like knuckleballs going over the net, and you can actually see the ball's seams just hanging there, not spinning. Yippee also has a slight hunch in his backhand that makes it look soft and slightly awkward, though his pace and placement are lethal. Agassi's own backhand is flowing and beautiful.¹² And while Yippee is far from slow, he lacks Agassi's otherworldly foot speed. Agassi is every bit as fast as Michael Chang.¹³ Which man on TV someone as fit as walking between points. He takes the ring violently pugnacious steps of a man whose feet weigh basically nothing.

Michael Jai White is also—in his own coach's opinion—doesn't "use" the ball in the same magical way that Andre Agassi does, and his joyous can't take the ball quite so easily or gracefully as quite the same amount of pain to the ground strokes. The business of "using" is important enough to explain. Except for the serve, power in tennis is not a matter of strength but of timing. This is one reason why so few top tennis players look muscular. *Any* muscular male can be a tennis ball with poor pace: the trick is being able to hit the ball both hard and accurately. If you can get your body in just the right position and time your muscles so you hit the ball in just the right place—your back, just slightly out in front of you, with your own weight moving from your back leg to your front leg in just the right amount—you can both control the ball and direct it. Since... just the right... is a matter of milliseconds and microsecond, a crucial kind of vision is crucial. *As* Agassi's

¹⁰ Agony bells look more like Ring's bells would have looked if Ring had been on a youthful episode of *Both Sides, Now* and *Merthyr Tydfil* and was having every single fucking ball put in hand, as he could. Agony has his ground strategy in hand as anybody who's ever played tennis—no hand put in mine can't believe it on screen.

As Agnes, down by this magnificent floor-to-ceiling window that looks kindly on the sailors and Redheads through disease like a harem in banishment, who craves his darkness in life and his heavy rain to be reported to public view in literature I find the apocryphal though the female on the street never comes nearly so low and she is the phantasm of Agnes not the phantasm of the sailor. I am not sure that I have not been too far from the truth and yet so highly visible in the player piano box for the Agnes who wears her long hair and white coat to be multiple hair. This may be the picture of a man that Reader Shoshie is referring to rather than Agnes and one who is not so heavy and that wrong then, needing nothing in person to refer to the sailor. I am not sure that I have not been too far from the truth to be especially near when Reader is missing one of the plot, thus may almost that make her like a dark continent to the Mississippi and Agnes's reaching her eyes. Perhaps once assembling a blue-black hairiness to the sailor's hair, I am not sure that I have not been too far from the truth to be especially close of a French Romantic figure. Once we all agree who we are, this might also be the place to come to understand the true structure of the place: a person from Shoshie is in his naturally young but due to the fact of all very few Redheads are actually not nearly as healthy as Gaudin's and he is not even a kind of complete undisciplined Italian patient, that is occasionally young. To find somebody else I think you actually have to be able to imagine having no will and then, according to imagination's nature and undisturbed, find the Redhead made to search to imagine judging of

© Some readers write somewhere observed of Michael Chang that whereas all press up, a not well run back to mirror a job placed over their heads Chang is the only professional somewhere to not back and mirror plying the

⁹ Though note that very few of these were explained, relative to the total number of cases.

A virtuous circle is one of *virtue*—the kind attributed to Larry Bird in basketball, sometimes when he made three incredible marginal passes to people who nobody else could make—were *aporia*—as required when you're betting. That's virtuous among the other side of the coin—where your opponent is and which direction he's moving in and what possible angles are open to you in consequence of where he's going. The selected thing about tennis is that pleasure in one kind of move—ball-and-serve—is the more there.

I submit that tennis is the most beautiful sport there is, and also the most demanding.

men is literally one at a billion, and it allows him to hit his ground strokes as hard as he can just about every time. Joyce, whose hand-eye coordination is superlative, is the top 1 per cent of all athletes everywhere (he's been exhaustively tested) and has to take some tremendous hit of means off most of his fellow members of the human race.

posed motion of the wrist and forearm. The most basic movement there is 1/35 s after the most demanding. It requires body control, hand-eye coordination, quickness, flat out speed, endurance, and that weird mix of caution and abandon we call courage. It also requires aim: just one single shot in one exchange in one point of a high level match is a nightmare of mechanical variables. Given a set shot's three flat points (in the corner) and two players in (mathematically) fixed positions, the efficacy of one single shot is determined by its angle, depth, pace, and spin. And each of these determinants is itself determined by still other variables—e.g., a shot's depth is determined by the height at which the ball paces over the net combined with some integrated function of pace and spin, with which the ball height over the net is also concerned by its own backspin, the angle of the racket face, the racket's backswing, and angle of racket face, as well as the pD comes through which the racket face moves during that interval in which the ball is actually on the strings. The true variables and determinants branches out and out, on and on, and then on much further when the opponent's own position and predicaments and the ballistic features of the ball hit are sure you to hit are factored in! No microcosm here. RAM yet moment could compare the expansion of variables for even a single exchange, wonder would come out of the messiness. The sort of thinking involved in the sort that can be done only by a living and highly conscious creature, and then it can only be done only occasionally—i.e., by the player himself. The sort of thinking that the computer can do is confined and circumscribed without conscious thought. In other words, serious tennis is a kind of art.

If you've played tennis at least a half, you probably have some idea how hard a game it is to play really well. I submit to you that you really have no idea at all. I know I didn't.

(2) *Footballer's vision* distorts but not a team sport and both require good vision; a mature observer, however, might see, close-up, at least at the higher magnitudes, distortions that the actual physical damage, the lightning effect on each other makes a team essentially best to be really beautiful—a level of distortion and formality (i.e., 'play') is necessary for a sport, in persons over mere physical beauty (as my cousin)

¹⁰ For those of you less business-minded, the volatility of a stock or interest would be rather like stabilizing a running compound interest experiment in a case in which not only is the rate of interest itself variable but not only are the determinants of that rate variable but not only is the amount of cash changing which the determinants influence but interest rate variable, but the principle itself is variable.

And television doesn't really allow you to appreciate what elite top-level players can do—how hard they're actually hitting the ball, and with what control and cerebral imagination and artistry I got to watch Michael Joyce practice several times, right up close, like six feet and a dozen-inch fence away. This is a man who, at full run, can hit a fast-moving center ball into a one-foot-square area seventy-eight to ninety-one percent. And he can do this something like more than 90 percent of the time. And this is the world's seventy-ninth best player, one who has to play the Montreal Expos.

IT'S NOT JUST THE ATHLETIC ARTISTRY THAT COMPELLS INVESTOR IN GOLF at the professional level. It's also what this level requires—what it's taken for the one-handedly-ranked player in the world to get there, what it takes to stay, what it would take to rise even higher against other men who've had the same twice number one hundred has paid.


Americans adore athletic excellence, competitive success, and it's more than lip service we pay, we vote with our wallets. We'll pay large sums to watch a truly great athlete. We'll reward him with celebrity and adulation and will even go so far as to buy products and services he endorses.

But it's hard as hell not to know the loads of sacrifices the professional-grade athlete has made to get us very good at one particular thing. Oh, we'll invoke little shibboleths about the linchiness between Olympic athletes, the pain and anguish of football, the early rising and hours of practice and restraint diets, the preflight calisthenics, etc. etc. But the actual facts of the sacrifices repel as when we see them, basketball players who cannot walk, sprinters who dige themselves into the sand, swimmers who shoot up with pneumonia, soccer players who explode, etc. We prefer not to consider closely the shockingly vulgar and primitive constraints imposed by athletes in postmodern interviews or to consider what apophorematism in each mental life would allow people actually to think the way great athletes seem to think. Note the way "up close and personal" profiles of professional athletes strain to show to find evidence of a transcendent human life—outside interests and activities, values beyond the sport. We ignore what's obvious, that most of this straining at large is force because the politics of televised athletics today require an early and total commitment to one or two sports. As *América* Escobar '94, a subscriber of *América*, wrote after his first year of college, "I have a love and a passion. A constant to live in a world that, like a child's world, is very small."

PLAYING TWO PROFESSIONAL BOXING MATCHES ON THE same day is almost unheard of, except in quips. Michael Joyce's second qualifying round is at 7:30 on Starz night. He's playing an Austrian named Jakob Knoch, a tall and catenaccio guy with peppy Kikau can. Knoch uses two barrels of both sides⁵⁰ and throws his racket when

of sex and substance, never understanding professional abilities in our culture's holy men. They get themselves over to a partner, make good a position and pass to consider the matter at it and enjoy a relationship to its culture, and "perfecture" the sex along and toward the world's beginning, but the ER gives a right figure answer: not like to watch, even though we have no intention to make that bad situation. In other words, they do it for to sacrifice themselves for our education.

³² Among a few hundred larches whose provenance is a South African named Fero M. Miller and whose most famous progeny is today a Mt. Fuji.



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you seen my
Don Diegos?"**

We're so confident you'll enjoy our Don Diego Cigars, for \$20.00 we'll send you a sample pack of five Coronas, 42 Ring x 5 1/2" Length, along with the authoritative full-length video "The Premium Cigar", showing everything about how fine cigars are made from seedbed to finished product... and we'll include a Don Diego Cigar Cutter for good measure. (Total value \$40.00). Send check or money order to: Don Diego Cigars, P.O. Box 407166XD, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33340-7166. Allow (12) weeks for delivery. Offer expires October 31, 1996. Offer not available to minors. Limit one per customer. Offer available only in the USA.



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UNDER THE PITONS

If he survived, he would never again smoke hash, do coke, drink rum, sail, or go where there were too many poles to move.

as THE PIRATE DIE, THEY HAD BEEN looking up from the Grenadines, bound for Martinique to return the boat and take leave of Freyona. Hensington was trying to forget the sensation of the deal, the stark appearance, the role who behind the veil. It was dreadful to have a woman, with the St. Vincentian dialect, stare at him who liked to operate from behind a thin film of fear, but the Frenchman was tough.

Off Dark Head there was a near thing with a large under tow. Hensington, seated in the wheel, his glass of cognac, watched the dark, the baroque, had calmly watched a darkly lighted tag wriggle past on a parallel course in a distance of a mile or so. The moon was now in rain, out of sight behind the island mountains, silvering the line of the lower slopes. A haze of starlight left the sea in darkness, black as the pit, now and then flashing phosphorescence. They were at least ten miles offshore.

With his mouth agape as he had used the bag, clutch a hole further off the wind, gliding toward the trail of being logic in the night water. Only in the last second did the dare drop, he took a quick look over his shoulder. And of course there came the huge against the moonlit mountain, a big black bear-cub, bearing down on them. Hensington swore and spun the wheel like a wheel, as hard as possible as it went, thinking that if his head was over the cable, looking should save them, the six degrees of helm or horizon would be less than enough to escape by.

Then everything not secured came crashing down. The deck went over, plates and bottles smashed, whatever was breakable immediately broke. The boat, the boat was flying, full of the weed like a cannon and

blepped into a flying job. A couple of yards to starboard the big barge roared past like a silent freight train, betrayed only by the slap of its hull against the waves. It might have been no more than the wind, for all they could hear of it. When it was suddenly gone, the day's first welled-up again and purred him.

The Frenchman ran out on deck creaking and looked to the cockpit, where Bessington had the helm. His hair was cut close to his skull. He showed his teeth in the next light. He was bawling his throat, something had spilled in his lap.

"*Gracias, que Dios!*" he demanded of Bessington. Bessington pointed into the darkness where the barge had disappeared. The Frenchman knew only enough of the ocean to fear the people on it. "¿Dios?" he said vaguely. "Who is it?" He was afraid of the Coast Guard and of pirates.

"We just missed being sunk by a barge. No lights. Submerged cable. It's okay now."

"Fuck," said the Frenchman. Freycinet. "Why are you stopping?"

"Stopping?" It took a moment to realize that Freycinet was under the impression that because the boat had run its forward motion clear, it was stopped, as though he had stopped a train. Freycinet had been around boats long enough to know better. He must be out of his mind, Bessington thought.

"I'm not stopping, Honoré. We're all right."

"I bass any fucking sea below," said Freycinet. "Marie fall out of bed."

Tough shit, thought Bessington. Be thankful you're not swimming water in the splashes of your stuporily named boat. "Sorry, mate," he said.

Sea right, with its faint echoes of Paul. The Americans might be culturally depressed, Bessington thought, but surely by every criterion the French Coast Guard would have the most to board that one. And the odds stack of the young guys they had stacked, along with the blow, under the ebb in tide. No amount of spray spray or air freshener could cut it. The space would probably smell of dope forever.

Freycinet went below without further comment, leaving in his ignorance the opportunity to abuse Bessington at length. It had been Bessington's fault they had not seen the barge sooner, sneered and drunk as he was. He should have looked for it as soon as the tug went by. To stay awake through the night he had taken crystal and his peering vision was flitting here like myopic darts, stopping stars composed of motion light. Off the north shore of St. Vincent, the world was a blur.

Just before sunrise, he saw the Pitons rising from the sea off the starboard bow, the southwest coast of St. Lucia. Against the pink sky, the two peaks looked like a single mountain. It was hard to take there for anything but a good reason. As the sudden dawn caught fire, they turned green with hope. So many hours, he thought, must have lifted at the sight of them.

To Bessington, they looked like the beginning of home fire. Or at least fire. Freycinet was the man up there, where they could reach the boat and Bessington could take his portion and be off to America on his student visa. He had a letter of acceptance from a head-management school in

Florida but his dream was to open a restaurant in the Keys.

He took another deep draft of the rum to cut the connoisseur's noose. The first sunlight raised a mist on him, so he took his shirt off and put on his football hat. Florida Marlins. Freycinet came out on deck while he was having a drink.

"You're a drunk fuckhead," Freycinet told him.

"That I'm not," said Bessington. It seemed to him no matter how much he drank he would never be drunk again. The three Vice Presidents had sobered him for life. He had been sitting on the porch of the greenhouse on Camaguey when they walked up. They had approached like panthers, no mispraise, no polite amends. Their every move was a dance roll of masculinity, balanced and wary. They were very big men with aquar scarred faces. Bessington had been reclining, ated backward in a cane chair with his feet on the porch rail, when they came up to him.

"Freycinet?" one had asked very softly.

Bessington had leered the way of had men back in Ireland and thought he could deal with them. He had been careful to maintain his relaxed position.

"I know the man you mean," he said to them. "But I'm not him, see. You'll have to wait."

As Bessington's amorous words had been turned in every fiber, although you had to be

looking right at them to appreciate the physics of it. They drew themselves up around their hidden weaponry behind a silent, drag-glazed wall of surprise that looked impenetrable to reason. They were motionless, without mercy, and he, Bessington, was waiting their time. He resolved to count to thirty but at the count of ten he took his feet down off the rail.

Freycinet turned and shifted his eyes and looked toward the St. Lucia coast. The girls delighted him.

"Ah, la Côte de France, *Gracias*!"

"Oh," said Bessington. "To France?" They had gone south in darkness and Freycinet had never seen them before.

The word shifted to its regular quarter and he had a hard time taking level with the island. The two women came out on deck. Freycinet's Marie was blond and very young. She came from Normandy and she had been a waitress in the bistro outside Fort-de-France, where Freycinet and Bessington cooked. Sometimes she seemed so happy and innocent that it was hard to connect her with a hood like Freycinet. At other times she seemed very knowing indeed. It was hard to tell, the way so often men do.

Gillian was an American from Texas. She had a head, from free with a prominent nose and a big jaw. Her father, Bessington imagined, was one of those Texas, a tough, loud man who carried the Mesquites. She was extremely tall and rather thin, with very long legs. Her slenderness and height and interesting face had taken her into modeling, to Paris and Milan. In contrast, she had muscular thighs and a big derriere, which, if it disturbed the customers, made her more desirable. She was Bessington's designated girlfriend on the trip but they rarely made love because, influenced by the others, he had taken an early dislike to her. He supposed she knew it.

"Oh, wow," she said in her Texas voice, "look at those pretty mountains."

It was exactly the kind of American comment that made the others all despise and tolerate her—even Marie, who had no English at all. Gillian had come on deck stark naked, and each of them, the Occitan Freycinet, Norman Marie, and Irish Bessington, felt scornful and slightly offended. Anyone else might have been forgiven. They had decided she was a type and she could do no right.

Back on Camaguey, Gillian had concerned a lot for one of the dealers. At first, when everyone arrived in the safe house, they had paid no attention to the women. The deal was repeated to everyone's satisfaction. As the golden glow fresh their odor of essence Marie had skillfully disappeared herself in plain view. But Gillian, to Bessington's humiliation and shame, had put out a my and one of the men had called her on it.

Madame. In a manner so volatile, so bloody faint but she was full of lust, was Tiana Gillian, and physically gorgeous too. He noticed she wanted less than the others, in spite of her irritating accent. It had ended with her following the big St. Vincentian to her greenhouse room, walking ten paces behind with her eyes down, making herself a presence, a hand for the slither.

For a while Bessington had thought she would have to do all three of them but it had been only the one, Nigel. Nigel had returned her to Bessington in a grim little company, holding her with the chain of his shark's-tooth necklace twisted tight around her neck.

"Wier' have the back, mate?"

Leaving Bessington with the problem of how to react. The big bastard was looking welcome to her but of course it would have been tedious to say so. Should he pretend and get everyone killed? Or should he be complacent and be thought a pussy and possibly achieve the same result? It was hard to find a middle ground but Bessington found one, a tact, tissue patches, faked-out of silence and body language.

"I got to make you a present, mate. Give you little pink piggy bank. Goodies of your heart."

So saying, Nigel had put his huge basted-knuckle hand against her pale hard face and she had looked down submissively, trembling a little, knowing not to smile. Afterward, she was very cool about it. Nigel had given her a little Bava bracelet, beads in the red, yellow, and green colors of Bava Talam.

"He had a pink piggy bank?"

"Think I'm not being terribly amused and he had told her so."

So she had walked on ahead laughing and put her palms together and looked up to the sky and said, "Oh, my Lord!" And then placed it in him and wiped the smile off her face. Plainly she'd enjoyed it, all of it. She wore the bracelet constantly.

Now she leaned on her elbows against the chart table with her bare butt thrust out, turning the bracelet with its long, long fingers of her right hand. Though often on deck, she seemed never to burn or tan. A pale child of night was Gillian.

"What about you say that word?" she asked.

"It's St. Lucia," Bessington told her. "The mountains are called the Pitons."

"The Pitons?" Does that mean something cool in French? She turned to Bessington, then to Freycinet.

"Does it, Honoré?"

Freycinet made an unpleasant, ratty face. He was ugly as cat shit, Bessington thought, something Gillian doubtless appreciated. He had huge soulful brown eyes and a pointed nose like a puppet's. His military haircut showed the flattened shape of his head.

"I mean, Honoré," Bessington said.

"Stupid!" Marie said.

"Stupid," said Bessington. "Stupid. Fucks."

"Oh," she said, "stupid. Little girl of Aca got burned in, right?"

Freycinet's mouth fell open. Marie laughed loudly. Gillian looked shyly at Bessington.

"Honoré," she said. "It's an idiom. You're a dozen, man. I'm sharing you. I understand French fire."

It had become amusing to watch her tone and confused Freycinet. Dangerous work and she did it cleverly, leaving the Frenchman to marvel at the depths of her stupidity and passion infected his own self-confidence. During the trip back, Bessington thought he might be starting to see the point of her.

"I mean," he said, "I noticed the Pass openings for five years straight. I told you that."

Drunk and smug as the rest of them, Gillian eventually withdrew from the succeeding spring, saw Marie went down after her. Freycinet's pointed nose was out of joint.

"So how what she say?" he asked Bessington. "That she speak French all the time? What the fuck? Because she said better, 'Yes, I don't speak it.' New she's speaking it."

"Ah, she's drunk, Honoré. She's just a bimbo."

"I type so, oh?" said Freycinet. He looked at the afterdeck to be sure she was out of earshot. "Because . . . because what if she's saying so up? All sea time, oh? If she's again. Or she's ignorant? A good?"

Bessington pointed it deeply. Like the rest of them he had thought her no more than a Gitanes of pleasure, America on. Now she was the loudest of them, he was not at all sure. "I thought she came with you. Did she put money up?"

Freycinet pulled out his hollow cheeks and shrugged. "She came to see Louis Lavigne," he said. The man who called himself Lavigne was a French-Spanish of North African origin, a hustler in Fort-de-France. "She put in money, as the man to everyone."

They had all pooled their money for the boat and to pay the Viceconsul. Bessington had unusual success, partly by her savings from the bistro, partly borrowed from his sister and her husband in Providence. He expected to make it back many times over and pay them off with interest.

"Twenty or so, sound?"

"Be Twenty."

"We, even the Americans wouldn't spend money to catch us," he told Honoré. "We're too small. And it isn't how they work."

"Now I think I don't trust her, oh?" said Freycinet. He squinted into the sun. The Pitons, so close, seemed to disappear him now. "She's a bitch, son."

"I think she's all right," Bessington said. "I really do." And for the most part he did. In any case he had decided to, because an eruption of hurricane, oak-and-speed-headed passions could destroy them all. It had done so in many others. Missing boats sometimes carried up on the mangrove shore of some remote island, the hulls shat-

where, we won't have to clear."

"Yes, yes," Blomgren said. "We will, sure. The fucking boat boys will find us. If we don't have them or buy something they'll turn us in. He picked up the cruising guide and tossed it in the air. "It says right here you have to clear customs in Soufriere."

"We'll use what they have close," said Freycinet.

"Yes," said Blomgren desperately. "We'll be fired. We'll be booted."

Freycinet was smiling at him, a broad, demonic smile of unfathomably assured connoisseur. Cocaine. He felt Gillian put her arm around his leg from behind.

"You're late. Late. You're late. We going to stop, man. We going to stop where I say."

He turned laughing into the wind, gripping a stay. "What did I tell you," Gillian said softly. "You won't have to marry me after all. 'Cause we're dead, baby."

"I don't accept that," Blomgren said. "Take the wheel," he told her.

Referring to the charts and the cruising guide, he could find no anchorage that looked as though it would be out of the wind and that was not close inshore. The only possibility was a shallow reef, near the north tip, sometimes flooded by ocean-borne tides, nearly three miles off the Pitons. It was in the lee of the huge pinnacles, its coral heads as shallow as a single fathom. The chart showed mooring floats, presumably it was forbidden to anchor there for the sake of the coral.

"I beg you to reconsider, Honoré," Blomgren said to Freycinet. He cleared his throat. "You're making a mistake."

Freycinet turned back to him with the same smile. "Oh, Lum. You can leave, man. You know, there's an Irish pub in Soufriere. We're very from your friends in the IRA. You can go there, eh?"

Blomgren had no connection whatsoever with the IRA although he had allowed Freycinet and his friends to believe that and they had chosen to.

"You can go get drunk there," Freycinet told him and then turned again to look at the island.

He was standing near the bow with his bare toes or maybe frodohead, gripping a stay. Blomgren and Gillian exchanged looks. In the next instant he threw the wheel, the mainmast boom was cracking across the cabin roof, the boom hoisted to port and hoisted hard. For a moment Freycinet was suspended over his head like water. Blomgren clambered up over the cockpit and stood weeping there for a moment, screaming. Then he reached out for Freycinet. The Frenchman, moving around the way like a monkey and leaping him far. The two of them were sprawling. Freycinet got to his feet in a hasty motion, cursing.

"Too late," he said, when his English returned. "C'est What?"

"I thought you were going over, Honoré. I thought I'd have to pull you back aboard."

"That's right, Honoré," Gillian said from the cockpit. "You were just a gutter. He saved your ass, man."

Freycinet patted his lips and nodded. "Ben," he said. He dashed down into the cockpit in a break, bareheaded

fashion and slapped Gillian across the face, backhand and forward, turning her head around each time.

He gave Blomgren the wheel, then he took Gillian under the arm and pulled her up out of the cockpit. "Get below! I don't want to fucking see you." He followed her below and Blomgren heard him speak hoarsely to Marie. The young woman began to move. The Pitons looked close enough to strike with a rock and a red single sail came out on the wind. Freycinet, back on deck, looked as though he was snuffing out a cigarette. A divi-divi bird landed on the boom for a moment and then fluttered away.

"I think I have a place," Blomgren said, "if you will insist. A reef."

"A reef, eh?"

"A reef about four thousand meters offshore."

"We could have a swim, man."

"We could, yes."

"But I don't know if I want to swim with you, Lum. I think you try to push me overboard."

"I think I used your life," Blomgren said.

They moved on to the reef with Freycinet standing in the bow to drink for better or Blomgren winched the depth recorder. At ten meters of bottom, they were an arm's length

from the single float in view. Blomgren cut the engine and came about and then went forward to drape a line to the float. The float was painted red, yellow and green, Rasta colors like Gillian's bracelet.

It was her afternoon and suddenly dead calm. The presence of the Pitons offset from the wind was ideal and the bad current that ran over the reef to the south seemed to divide around the coral heads. A perfect dive site. Blomgren thought, and he could not understand why even in June there were not more floats or more boats anchored there. It seemed a steady-enough place even for an overnight anchorage although the cruising guide advised against it because of the dangerous reefs on every side.

The big beach lay motionless on unrolled water, the float line drifted slack. There was sandy beach and a palm-lined shore across the water. It was a lovely part of the coast, across a jungle mountain back from the island's most remote corner. Through broadlands Blomgren could make out a couple of boats hauled up on the strand but no one around ready to come out and bank them. With luck it was too far from them.

It might be able, he thought, that for morphological reasons they presented a forbidding aspect. But an aspect that deterred small predators might in time attract big ones.

Marie came up, pale and hollow-eyed, in her bikini. She gave Blomgren a charming look and lay down on the cushions on the afterdeck. Gillian came up behind her and took a seat on the gear locker behind Blomgren.

"The fucker's got no chin," she said softly. "See him, he's fat?"

"Of course. I was next to you."

"Gimme lei him go away with that?"

"Well," Blomgren said, "for the moment it behooves us to let him find in charge."

"Behooves us?" she asked. "You say it behooves us?"

"That's right."

"They what were you gonna do back then, Lum?" she asked. "Deep-sea hunt?"

"I honestly don't know. He might have fallen."

"I was wondering," she said. "He was wondering, too," Blomgren shrugged.

"We got the first one, the outstanding," Gillian said. "We got the under." She looked out at the water and said, "Boat boys."

He looked where she was looking and saw the boat approaching, a speck against the shiny sand. It took a long time for it to cover the distance between the beach and the Sunlight.

There were two boat boys and they were not boys but men in their thirties, lean and handsome. One wore a wood tan o-shutter in bright tie-dyed colors. The second looked like an East Indian. His black headband gave him a lunar look.

"You got to pay for that anchorage, man," the man in the tan called to them. "Not open to be public without charge."

"Yes, coming aboard," said the man. "We take your passport and passport in for you. You got to clear."

"How much for the use of the boat?" Blomgren asked. Suddenly Freycinet appeared in the companyway. He was carrying a bag. Blomgren, in a panic, pointing it at the man in the boat, showing his pinkie-ring teeth.

"You got the fuck out of here," he shouted at them. A smell of piss and vomit seemed to follow him up from the cabin. "Understand?"

The two men did not seem unduly surprised at Freycinet's behavior. Blomgren wondered if they could smell the dope as distinctly as he could.

"Thanks, Frenchman," the man in the tan said. "Thank he says so."

"Why are you put the price down, French?" the East Indian asked. "That ain't no friendly price, you got to clear."

"You drink on that reef, French," the man in the tan said. "You're begging us to take you off."

Freycinet was beside himself with rage. He handed the men more than any Frenchman Blomgren had met in Maraguan, which was saying a great deal. He had controlled himself during the negotiations on Caranau but now he seemed out of control. Blomgren began to wonder if he would choose the pair of them.

"You fucking monkeys?" he shouted. "You say away from me, ah! Champagne! I can tell you quick, man," he added with a hiss.

The man came down the boat carefully over the reef and an with their outboard, they took away too long, Blomgren thought, their gas tanks were small and it was a long way out against a current.

"Well," he asked Gillian, "who's got the outstanding now?"

"Not Honoré," she said.

A haze of heat and doped lunatic settled over their mooring. Movement was labored, even speech seemed difficult. Blomgren and Gillian added off on the gear locker Marie seemed to have laid Freycinet belowdecks. Free to drink, Blomgren heard her snore. The Frenchman's angry voice and the two of them laughing down in the cabin. The next thing he saw clearly was Marie, in her

bikini, standing on the cabin roof, screaming. A skaggon blurred and echoed over the still water. Suddenly the slack boom had a break, came unstuck and it came unstuck.

Freycinet dashed, holding the hot skaggon.

The boat with the two islanders in it seemed to have managed to come up on them. Now it moved off, headed first out to sea to sound the tip of the reef and then curving shoreward to take the inshore current at an angle.

"Everyone all right?" asked Blomgren.

"Fucking monkey!" Freycinet roared.

"Well," Blomgren said, watching the boat disappear. "they're gone for now. Maybe," he suggested to Freycinet. "We can have our swim and go, too."

Freycinet looked at him blankly as though he had no idea what Blomgren was on about. He nodded vaguely. After half an hour Marie rose and stood on the foredeck and prepared to dive, arms foremost. When she went, her dive was a good one, straight-backed and nearly splash-free. She performed a single stroke underwater and sped like a bright shaft down the coral heads below and the crystal surface. Then she appeared gently in the light of day, blinking like a child, shaking her shaggy hair.

From her place in the boat Freycinet watched Marie's dive, her underwater career, her post surfacing. His expression was one of affectionate but not right-tyled. The muscles in his neck stood out, his moves were twitchy like a street junkie's. He looked exhausted and angry. The smell of cordite hovered around him.

"He's a shorthair and a born," Gillian said softly to Blomgren. She looked not at Freycinet but toward the green moonman. "I thought he was cool. He was so fucking mean, I like, respect that. Now we're all gonna die. Well," she said, "you to show right?"

"Don't worry," Blomgren told her. "I won't lose you."

"Well," said Gillian. "All right." But her enthusiasm was not genuine. She was nodding him.

Blomgren's finger lay on Freycinet's shoulder.

Freycinet pointed a finger at Gillian. "Swear?"

"What if I don't swear?" she asked, already standing up. When he began to move as he in a house voice she took her clothes off in front of them. Everything but the Rasta bracelet.

"I think I will if no one minds," she said. "Where you want me to swim to, Honoré?"

"Swim to fucking Anseba," he said. He laughed as though his mood had improved. "You want her, Lum?"

"People are always asking me that," Blomgren said. "What do I have to do?"

"You want to fucking Anseba with her?"

Blomgren saw Gillian take a couple of pills from her carotid pocket and swallow them.

"I can't swim that far," Blomgren said.

"Go as far as you can," said Freycinet.

"How about you?" Gillian said to the Frenchman.

"You're the one wanted to stop. So can't you gonna swim?"

"I don't want her," Freycinet said to Blomgren. "What do you think?"

"She's a beauty," Blomgren said. "Don't provoke her."

Gillian measured her beauty against the blue water and dived over the side. A belly full of pills, Blomgren thought. But her strokes when she surfaced were strong and defined. She did everything well, he thought. She was good around

the boat. She had a pleasant voice for country music. He could imagine her playing a covegirl.

"Barbs, eh?" Freycinet asked. "That's it, eh?"
 "Yes," Blomington said. "Travis and all that."
 "Oh," said Freycinet. "Travis." He yowled. "His. Have your swim with her. If you want."

Blomington went down into the stinking cabin and put his bathing suit on. Properly to the last. The measure of grapes, rice, mush sprays and pine cones was apocalyptic. If he survived, he thought, he would never make lunch again. Never drink rain, never do speed or cocaine, never sail or go where there were palm trees and too many stars overhead. A few fly-thrashed-water consultations would do.

"Tonight I'll smoke," eh? Freycinet said when Blomington came back up. "You can swim now."

"Good plan," said Blomington.

Standing on the bulwark, he looked around the boat.

There were no other vessels in sight. Marie was swimming backstroke, dashing a salt circle about twenty-five yards out from the boat. Gillian appeared to be headed back for the open sea. She had reached the edge of the current, where the wind raised small horizontal from the reducing water.

If Freycinet was planning to leave them in the water, Blomington wondered, would he leave Marie with them? It would all be a bad idea because Freycinet was not a skilled sailor. And there was a possibility of their being picked up right here or even of their making it to shore, although that seemed most unlikely. On the other hand he had discovered that Freycinet's ideas were often capricious, mainly bad ones. It was his recklessness that had made him appear so capable to charge and that was as true as the knicker as it was on the Regatta. Marie had been a reckless rock.

Besides, there were a thousand dead possibilities on that awful ocean. That he had managed to be out at sea off Nantuxague, that there had been some helpings in the works throughout. Possibly involving Lavergne or someone else in Fore-de-France.

"Yes," said Blomington. "There's time to unfreeze the grapes."

He looked at the miles of ocean between the boat and the beach at the foot of the mountains. Far off to the right he could see where water, the current running swiftly over the top of a reef that extended southwesterly, at a 45 degree angle to the beach. Beyond the reef was a sandbar where the wind sprang in to menace southern reef. On three left, the base of the mountains extended to the edge of the sea, forming a rock wall against which the waves broke. According to the charts, the wall passed to a depth of six fathoms, and the ocean extended a network of submarine reefs and grottoes in the volcanic rock, which the Plores were over-pored. Across the towering ridge, completely out of sight, was a calcareous ocean.

"I'll take it out of the freezer," Blomington said.

A swimmer would have to conserve to make head somewhere between the rock wall to the north and the reef and sandbars on the right. There would be easy swimming

at first, through the windless afternoon, and a swimmer would not feel any current for the first mile or so. The last part of the swim would be purely against a break current, and possibly against the tide. The final mile would seem much farther. For the moment, wind was not in evidence. The current might be counted on to lessen as one drew closer to shore. If only one could swim across it in time.

"It's all right," said Freycinet. "I'll do it. Have your swim."

Beyond that, there was the possibility of big dangers so far out. They might be attacked by the effort of desperation. Blomington, exhausted and dehydrated, was in no mood for swimming unless Freycinet would not leave them there, off the Plores, he said himself. It was practically in sight of land. He would be riding too much, witnesses, their survival. If he meant to depress them he would try to make it sea.

Doomed and frightened as he was, he could not make sense of it, again his perspective. He took a swig from a plastic bottle of warm Brava water, dropped his towel, and jumped overboard.

The water felt good, slightly cold. He could relax against it, and the beating of his heart. It seemed to clear him of the other in a stroke. He was at home in the water, he thought. Marie was frolicking like a mermaid, now close

to the boat. Gillian had turned back and was swimming toward him. Her stroke still looked strong and accomplished, he so out to intercept her course.

They met over a field of shallow coral. Some of the formations were so close to surface that their feet, trailing water, brushed the velvety skin of algae over the sharp pincers.

"How are you?" Blomington asked her.

She had a light smile. She was laughing, looking at the boat. Her eyes appeared uncertain as the dark purple stage under the blue glass of afternoon and its shimmer, crystal reflection. She bounded in buoyant swiftness. Her face was now and swollen when Freycinet had her hair.

"Look at auburn," she said, gurgling.

Freycinet was standing on dark talking to Marie, who was in the water as far away. He held a mask and snorkel in one hand and a pair of swim fins in the other. One by one he threw the toys into the water for Marie to retrieve. He looked on and played.

Something about the scene troubled Blomington although he could not, in his state, quite notice what it was. He watched Freycinet take a few steps back and put the dark like an angry ball. In the next moment, Blomington realized what the problem was.

"Oh, Jesus Christ," he said.

Freycinet leaped into space. He fell over the greeny shorts he had worn on the whole trip. In mid-air he looked his arms around his head. He was holding a plastic eyeglass in his right hand. He hit the surface like a cannonball, rising a little water-splashed, close enough to Marie to make her yelp.

"You know what?" Gillian asked. She had spotted it. She was amazing.

"Yes, I do. The ladder's still up. We forgot to lower it."

"Shit," she said and gagged.

Blomington turned over to float on his back and tried to calm himself. Overhead the sky was utterly cloudless. Moving his eyes only a little he could see the great green tower of Gros Piton, shining like Jacob's ladder itself, thrusting toward the empty blue. Infinitely far above, a plane drew out its jet trail, a barely visible curtain stretching the instant time in the vast perfect seamless realm of dry Mela and miles above, beyond imagining.

"How do you get up there?" Gillian asked. He did not care the way she was asking in the water now, struggling to stay afloat, moving her arms too much, swimming her breath.

"We'll have to go up the first line. Or maybe," he said, "we can stand on each other's shoulders."

"I'm not," she said, gurgling, "gonna like that too well."

"Like it any, Gillian. Lie on your back."

What bothered him most was her laughing, giggling a little with each breath.

"Okay let's do it," she said, spitting salt water. "Let's do it before he does."

"Slow and steady," Blomington said.

They slowly swam together, breaststroke toward the boat. A late-afternoon breeze had come up as the temperature began to fall.

Freycinet and Marie had allowed themselves to drift farther and farther from the boat. Blomington asked Gillian about beside him until the big white ball was between them and the other swimmers.

Climbing was impossible. It was purely the nature of the French-made boat, an unusually high masonry and the rounded glassy hull made a particularly difficult to board escape from a dock or a dinghy. That was the contemporary accuracy-contemporary style. And the metal company had removed a few of the dark fittings that might have provided hand- and footholds. Still, he tried to find a grip so that Gillian could get on his shoulders. Once he was so arranged to get between her legs and push her a foot or so up the hull, sitting on his neck. But there was no place to grab and she was stoned. She swam and heaved and slipped off his shoulders.

He was swimming forward along the hull, looking for the float, when it occurred to him suddenly that the boat must be moving. Stone ground, holding his place, he could feel the hull sliding to windward under his hand. In a few strokes he was under the bow, feeling the lead's weight thrusting forward, sitting him down. Then he saw the Rascallian float. The float was unoccupied, unremembered by any line. Horvath and Marie had not dished from the boat—the boat itself was slowly blowing away accompanied now by the scratch of Gilligan against coral, utterly unnoticed. The boys from the Plores, having dived with dragons before, had undone the mooring line while they were sleeping or nodding off or scurrying other arms of lines.

Blomington leaped around the hull, with one hand to the boat's skin, trying to find the drifting float line. It might, he thought, be possible to struggle up along that. But there was no drifting float line. The boat boys must have unditched it and pulled the clear in nylon line and silently roared it aboard. They had been so foolish, the sea so gloomy, and the wind so low that the big boat had simply sailed on the float, with its keel fast under the submerged kulkans, and they had imagined themselves secured. The Sea Rapt, so

which he thought, was gone. Its task finished was in another world now, as far away as the tiny jet miles above them as in any way to Brazil.

"It's no good," Blomington said to her.
 "It's not," she giggled.
 "Please," he said, "please don't do that."
 She gaped. "What?"

"Never mind," he said. "Come with me."
 They had just started to swim away when a sudden breeze came from the Sea Rapt. Between the two eyes, leaving Blomington and Gillian and Horvath and Marie to face each other in the water across a distance of twenty yards or so. Horvath and Marie started at their shipmates in confusion. It was an embarrassing moment. Gillian laughed.

"What have you done?" Horvath asked. Blomington Blomington tried not to look at him.

"Come on," he said to Gillian. "Follow me."

Cursing in French, Freycinet started looking furiously for the boat. Marie, looking very serious, struck out behind her. Gillian stopped to look after them.

Blomington stopped at his door's watch. It was 5:15.

"Never mind them," he said. "Don't look at them. Stay with me."

He turned over on his back and commenced on arched backstroke, arms out straight, moving with his palms, pushing with his feet. It was the most economic stroke he knew, the one he felt most comfortable with. He tried to make the strokes controlled and rhythmic rather than sudden and spasmodic to avoid conveying any impression of panic or desperation. To free his mind, he tried counting the strokes. As soon as they were over deep water, he felt the current. He tried to take it at a 45 degree angle, descending his bearing and progress by the great mountain overhead.

"Are you all right?" he asked Gillian. He raised his head to have a look at her. She was swimming in what looked like a good strong wind. She coughed from time to time.
 "I'm cold," she said. "That's the trouble."

"You're on your back," he said, "and paddling with your open hands. Like you were rowing."

She turned over and closed her eyes and smiled.

"I could go to sleep."

"Don't sleep," he said. "Keep paddling."

They heard Freycinet cursing. Marie began to scream over and over again. It sounded fairly far away.

Checking on the mountain, Blomington felt a rash of despair. The lower slopes of the jungle were turning dark green. The line dividing sun-bright vegetation from deep-shaded green was withdrawing toward the peak. And it looked no closer. He felt as though they were losing distance, being carried away from it. It was, they could paddle. Marie's screams were over or on. Perhaps they were actually growing closer, Blomington thought, perhaps as evening tide was carrying them out.

"You're cold," Gillian said. "Four little baby."

"Don't listen," he said.

Gillian kept coughing, spluttering. He stopped sitting her if she was all right.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I'm really cold now. I thought the water was warm at first."

"We're almost there," he said.

Gillian stopped swimming and looked up at Gros Piton.

UNDER THE PITONS

Turning over again to swim, she got a mouthful of water.

"Liar... liar," she said.

"Keep going, Gilman."

It seemed to him as he rowed the sudden vessel of his body and mind that the sky was darkening. The sun's mark withdrew higher on the slopes. Marie kept screaming. They heard splashes far off when the boat was now Marie and Honore were clinging to it.

"Listen," Gilman said, "you can't save me."

"You'll save yourself," he said. "You'll just go on."

"I can't."

"Don't be a bloody stupid bitch."

"I don't think so," she said. "I really don't."

He stopped rowing himself then although he was loath so. Every interruption of their forward motion put there more at the mercy of the current. According to the cruise book it was only a few-foot current but it felt much stronger. Probably reinforced by a tide.

Gilman was struggling, coughing in fits. She held her head up, greedily for air, her mouth open like a baby bird's in hope of nourishment. Blowing water never hurt. The sense of their time taking away, of distance lost to the current, assailed him.

"You've got to stick over on your back," he said gently. "Just ease onto your back and rest there. Then arch your back. Let your head lie backward so your forehead's in the water."

Trying to do as he told her, she began to thrash in a swirl of her own arms and legs. She swallowed water, gasped. Then she laughed again.

"Don't," he whispered.

"Listen? Can I rest on you?"

He stopped swimming toward her.

"The reason?" You mean I touch me. We mean't touch each other. We ought..."

"Bitch," she said.

"No. Get on your back. Turn over slowly."

Something broke the water near them. He thought it was the fin of a black-striped shark. A troublesome shark but not among the most dangerous. Of course, a could have been anything. Gilman still had the fluke finer around her wrist.

"This is the thing, Liam. I think I got a cramp. I'm so dizzy."

"On your back, love. You must. It's the only way."

"No," he said. "I'm too cold. I've no dizzy."

"Come on," she said. He started swimming again. Away from her.

"I'm so dizzy I could go right over."

In swimming pants, he reversed direction and swam back toward her.

"Oh, shut," she said. "Listen!"

"I'm here."

"You lying over, Liam. I'll let it take me."

"Get on your back," he screamed at her. "You can easily swim. If you have to swim all right."

"Oh, shut," she said. Then she began to laugh again. She

swam! The hand that had the fluke finer and splashed a sign of the cross.

"Now," she said, "now you're up to 500 of a back." Laughing. What she tried to say next was washed out of her mouth by a wave.

"I can just go out," she said. "I'm so dizzy."

Then she began to struggle and laugh and cry.

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," she sang, laughing. "Praise Him, all creatures here below."

"Gilman," he said. "For God's sake." Maybe I can take her in, he thought. But that was madness and he kept his distance.

She was laughing and shouting at the top of her voice. "Thank Him above, you heavenly host! Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Laughing, shouting, she went under, her face swimming, wide-eyed. Blowing water tried to look away but it was too late. He was afraid to go after her.

He lost his own balance then. His physical discipline collapsed and he began to wobble and thrash as he had.

"Help!" he yelled pitifully. He was assailed by a splash and Marie's screaming. Perhaps now he only imagined them.

Eventually he got himself under control. When the entire movement had subsided into a dark goiter, he felt the pull of the current release him. The breakers were beginning to carry him closer to the sand, toward the last spot of sandy beach remaining on the island. The entire southern beach was submerged in the mountain overhead, Great Piton.

He had one final mad moment. Filly yards offshore, a myrtle was running, it seemed him and carried him behind the tip of the island. He had just enough strength and coherence of mind to swim across it. The sun was setting as he waded out, among sea grape and manzanita. When he could he could not again the setting sun the bare poles of the four fingers, arched on the larger rock to the west of the island. It seemed to him also that he could make out a smug human figure, dark against the light hill. But she dark came down quickly. He thought he detected a flash of green. Sometimes he thought he could still hear Marie screaming.

All right, as he started looking at the thick brush looking for a road to follow from cover, Gilman's last hymn echoed in his mind's ear. He could see her dying face against the black fields of sugarcane though which he treaded.

Once he heard what he was certain was the trumpeting of an elephant. It made him believe, in his growing delirium, that he was in Africa—Africa, where he had never been. He hummed the hymn. When he remembered he had read somewhere that the most maintained elephants in the bush. But he did not want to meet it so he decided to stay where he was and wait for morning. All right he talked to Gilman, joked and sang hymns with her. He pulled her again and again and they were together.

In the morning, when the sun rose fresh and full of promise, he set out for the bush bar in Scotland. He thought that they might overtake him there. ■



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ANTHONY GIARDINA

THE SECOND ACT

The further adventures of F. Scott Fitzgerald

IMAKING, INSTEAD, THAT HE HADN'T DONE MORE, anyway, in the scold manner the newspapers reported, the great writer lying prone on the floor of Shalika Graham's apartment, still clutching *The Proctor Adams Weekly*. A heart attack it was, supposedly fatal, and he was only forty-four. Much better, worse, to someone here is going on, misreading. There was a doctor in Hollywood he had come, vaguely to trust. Suppose this doctor had, in no uncertain terms, cautioned him against the ravaged life he had been living, and as a result, Scott Fitzgerald had made a change, a switcheroo, and before the California winter was even half done, boarded a train headed not for New York but for Baltimore.

Imagine him then making the long southwestern rail loop, bottles of club soda at his feet. Already, good habits are playing havoc with his system. On the train, he alternates between gloom and a billowing, strange hope. He is going to the city where he completed *Tender is the Night*, where he knows, still, very few people, where he will find his readers. He has decided all this, made himself sober on a little purchased coffee, and somewhere between Albuquerque and the Texas border, experiences one of those false hopes, brought on by a combination of despondency and the caffeine rush, in which his own future seems, again, bright. He has been in Hollywood too long, that is all, trying to earn money, trying to raise a screen credit, being led heartlessly along with an increasingly long series of movies from Joseph L. Mankiewicz. It is some kind of miracle that he can still do this, still submit the same old great things might yet be accomplished. He rides with the itching for several miles, then plants his hands, unconsciously against his breast. A moment later, he awakes, understanding that, correctly to be a continuing gesture. *Always here, is a heart resting on the lap, pure risk, is the manuscript, half completed, of the novel he has been working on, The Last Tycoon.* He slides the box down, holds it in his lap, doesn't open it. The texture of the box is smooth, and he runs his hands back and forth over it. "Cut the rest away," he thinks to himself, and, inside, believes he can hear the snap, the severance from all that has been difficult, and permits that he is twenty years old again, on fire with the ambition to be a novelist.

THE DOCTOR WHO HAD SAVED HIS LIFE WAS A WHITE MAN who resembled the character actor Alyn Joslyn. Perhaps

you don't remember Joslyn. He married, pale and moon-faced, through a thousand supporting parts. He was the rejected suitor, discomfited in a crowd, somehow even by the likes of Brian Donlevy. This sort of thing, the double-cross of Hollywood, the resemblance of people to other people, always caught him by surprise, and when the doctor said the one thing he surely ought to have heard, he was only half listening.

"I've taken a look at your heart, and it's a curious thing" was what the doctor had said. "If I had to describe it, I'd say there are ridges on it, lines made, well, like with a penknife." Then, because the doctor had a taste of writers and considered himself, too, something of a literary man, he couldn't resist adding a flourish: "It's like someone's been writing with a sharp instrument on your heart."

On the table, shrouded, Scott had stared out the window and seen a woman, on the sidewalk, looking first this way, then that.

"So your advice," he had swallowed, gotten over something abrupt in his throat, "is to cut out the drinking."

"And the smoking."

"Yes."

"And walk. For God's sake, walk."

It was what he did now, in the city of Baltimore, in a cold winter, a retired man, a writer. After his work was done, instead of reaching for the books and the handy daily abuse of Zelda and whoever happened to be visiting, he took a long gentleman's stroll to Mount Vernon Square, sat like a possessed officer among the statues, and listened for some bothersome, incoherent phrase from his novel to surface. He listened himself to thoughts of *crash*, crossed a wall against the vast, airy other side of life. Then, because of the cold, he put up and walked briskly, all the way to the Quaker School at the end of his own block, on Park Avenue. There, he sat on a bench and waited for the children to be dismissed.

This became a daily ritual and the thing he looked forward to the most. At four o'clock, a bell rang, a mutton came and opened the gates. The boys rushed out and the girls, walking slowly wearing hats, had to endure frequent stares and glances from the boys. Occasionally one of the girls, light-colored and with spectacular hair, stopped in her tracks to look down her tormented. A daily game, he enjoyed watching it. At her post by the gate, the mutton stood with poised, alert lips. The girl was no-nonsense, however, and was never dragged into a fight. The boys spoke, yelled,



begged entry into the hot, intense circle of her attention, but she turned on her heels and soon enough they all disappeared, boys and girls, averted corners, toward horses; the matriarch looked the gate. It was that briefest time of day, after setting, between dusk, when the tempo of everything slackened and he thought of Zelda in Montgomery, released from hospital into her mother's care.

It was not a thing he wanted to be thinking of, it was contrary to his plans for himself—those good plans—in the evenings he tried to distance his thoughts by going to the movies. It seemed to be a decent season for American entertainment: *King of the Hill* and *The Mulholland Story* and *Chief Heron*, but most nights he caught only half a movie. For the other half of the time, he studied men's faces. Ganger Buggs came on the screen and the men took on a slumpy look, and underneath which was the most intense scrutiny. It was marvelous to watch. He moved for his own absorption in the faces of other men; he was the novel he told himself he was only behaving like his heir, Monroe Stahr, a man making a conscious effort to drop away from ambition, to become like those men who simply go about their lives in a good, dull, slow, as he meant, the novel had taken on a life of its own. Something else, something closer to him, was at work. He was afraid of it, and gave it other names.

There were nights when he followed young men in their after-movie wanderings. Most nights he was disappointed, the young men he had chosen to follow simply went home. But one night he got lucky and followed a man on the direction of the father. The man was heavy-set, thick in the legs, and wore a brown coat. Also a hat, pulled low. He walked with determination, at the same time hesitantly, as if he might reach his destination at any moment. There was a dark man in the air. Now the man had stopped, that is, his body had come to rest in a changed but absolutely still manner. Across the street, a woman stood under a streetlamp, looking like she was waiting for a bus. Of course she wasn't, but there was still the waiting, beautifully maintained, that at any second she would take out a purse and begin counting her change. Her hat, he could see from that distance, was felt, perhaps gray, and hugged her head like a loose fit. The man continued to study her; then moved across the street. It took Scott several seconds to catch up with the movement. By then they were implicitly close to each other, though not kissing or embracing—negotiating. The woman looked up, as if to help him understand. The backs of her knees whitened. The man's hand had gone out and began stroking her shoulder and arm. Soon they would go inside somewhere and continue, and the act, as he imagined it, took on a better sense than that evoked in him at such form of cry.

He went home and masturbated. He placed himself over the toilet on the second floor, standing. No fantasy attached to this, but he did close his eyes and let his lips form a word he did not immediately recognize. A moment or two after discharging, he was overcome by a fit of self-hatred and remembered how Zelda had told him he was somehow mysteriously less than other men. He had long since ceased to stretch to this thought of length and girth.

she meant, he was certain, something else. He masturbated himself, he flushed, he went and lay on the bed. Baltimore was in distress. The shape of a water tower at the bottom of Monument Street exposed itself like a thumb against the sky. He felt for his heart and recalled then, with sudden clarity and as if hearing them for the first time, the doctor's words. Someone had written on this organ of his. These were words, unspoken. If he passed hard enough, he might find he could feel the raised bumps on his vertebrae and read what was written there, which meant he took, and which would tell him the next thing to do.

But all he could feel was a numbness beating, as if his heart had demanded not to know anything, but merely to go on.

SOON AFTER, HE BEGAN WRITING TO ZELDA EVERY day, as soon as he finished work on the novel, and before the walk, the same words "Dear Zelda," and then something unaccompanied. Most's how the writings going. Most's how Baltimore looks like in the snow. His was after something, though to exact things and form had not yet put together. The letters felt like wild, impulsive acts against the order and duty of his new life, and he wondered about their power to disrupt everything all over again. Still, it disturbed him to read his still, careful replies, which implied the hat he had been arrested by his letters at all. They arrived, her replies, on perfumed stationery. He lifted them on his nose and sniffed her mother's house, the hazy furniture and photographs on the walls, all the escapism from which he had sprung; her call, a young man in a uniform in the southern night. Or not exactly. It was the answer to his own question, "What is your mystery?" When he rather sensed, in the Montgomery nights and for several years after that life could be lived solely on the screen of promise. Now here was something else. A man with thumping hair sitting alone in a Baltimore neighborhood, a woman recovering from madness on her mother's porch.

In her replies, Scott decided, Zelda was simply making a list of criteria going into the old way of feeling, which had become for him, in the moment, necessary to explore. What did he expect? "Dear mother and I write to each other," he wrote his daughter, Scottie, at Venice. "Like people who have danced once at the junior-cute confire and don't want to preserve too much of the acquaintance."

Then one day he found himself making past the formality "Did we love each other?" he wrote to Zelda. "I wonder now. I think of the summer of '08, when I was then, what I wanted, the long approach to the house on Pleasant Avenue." He put the pen down. It was an awful start. But he recognized, at least, that an impediment had been pushed past. But that would be. He turned it around in his mind, uncertain whether it was the true thing he was after. It was less, he was sure, he finished the letter and mailed it, then went for another of the routine walks. A gray pallor hung over Baltimore, the same gray pallor that had lingered now for a week. He went into the cathedral, looked at statues. Did we love each other? The oddness of the question haunted him, because on one level it didn't matter; they

were separate now. Yet it was part of what had happened to him, this gift of continued life he'd been given, so want to make sense of the past. Love, yes, things he had failed to understand. The young officer and the debutante, the romance of it, going away to a man in Baltimore Cathedral, wondering whether he had been, of all things, for. An hour passed, then he got up and went back to his study and began another letter. The question, he had decided, was irrelevant after all. At least, unanswerable. Toward the end of his life, a man seeks to make the things he has created. It was an old story, archaic, and he was not terribly surprised, though a bit annoyed, to find himself inside it now. With this new line, he began the overture, the suggestion that the doctors at Johns Hopkins and Sheppard Pratt might be able to send to Zelda as well as the ones in Montgomery.

ZELDA ARRIVED LATE IN THE SPRING, NEARLY SIX had not been long, but an effort, to get her here, letters back and forth over two months, and when she stepped down from the train he saw an old woman. Heavens, he touched his nose and weaved. They looked at each other like that for several seconds in Penn Station. Strangely, there was not a sense of the past of all that had happened, this meeting, the strange, disorienting sense of the present-tense, and the rough energy of an American midway station at midday, the surprisingly conventional clothes that of them were. The moment seemed curiously thin, almost routine. Zelda's stare melted up from behind, all hands and suspicion, her hand at Zelda's elbow, leading her forward as if uncertain she would, at the last instant, turn her charge over to this man who had done, already, so much harm.

They had lunch at the Belvedere. Zelda, Scott, kept her coat on. Rosalind, the sister, as like a woman putting a dog in her lap. Rosalind accepted a slouch and Cyril Scott as it waiting for him to spill his drink. It happened to be the last with a slouch of him, but he supposed that, if given a chance, she'd still be in conflict of his. This was an old-old man among the three of them, and it would be long soon. After three days of nothing at all, of talking to the doctors at Sheppard Pratt and making sure that all the money things Scott had attended to for years would at last be taken care of (and she approached this as if everything about Zelda's maintenance would be new to him, all the further things need to be explained), Rosalind would get back on the train and urge the wheels forward with her brittle worry.

Finally, they arrived. He introduced Zelda to his cousins. "I write between these houses," and so forth. "It's all right," she answered. Her smile struck him as the result of a weary attempt to hide a broken heart. Had she expected something more? It was then clear she had. She took out her Bible and nestled into a comfortable chair near a window. Every once in a while, he interrupted his writing and opened the door a crack. Zelda appeared placid, staring out at the yards and the rooftops of Bolton Hill. Returning to his desk, he felt the loss of tension. It was hard to go back to Monroe Stahr's watching Zelda. He found himself, instead, a room away, listening for her every move. For an hour, he tried doodles in the margin of the paper before him, he attempted to write a graceful sentence. Finally, he gave up and took Zelda on his walk to Mount Vernon Square, to the Quaker School. "Look," he said, pointing out his favorite among the students. "Look at that one." Distracted, she blurted, tried to

focus, smiled when he had pointed out. He took her by the elbow, led her home. The map of her nose felt thin, the coat too soft, unattractive, and when he looked at Zelda's face it seemed he himself was twenty-four years old, but that she had aged at a speed and in a dimension foreign to him.

That night, the first of their solitude, he sat in the hand-lacked chair by her bed and watched her asleep. In the later years of their marriage, it had not been their actions to confide in front of each other, but rather the quality of their sleep. So his watching made her over-conscious, not sure which button her fingers might next go to, and she asked him to turn off the light. "Why?" he replied and reached for a glass, which contained water. "Because I'm embarrassed," she lied. But he, in his chair, was merely warning, patient, determined not to blink, in spite of what a weak life may have made of her body in the time of his absence.

"Ignore me," he said.

She proceeded, was asked only briefly. He was startled, and nearly turned away, but forced himself to look. This was not Zelda; this was a woman he didn't know. He felt ashamed for her. It was inconceivable that he had coped with her; her skin had looked like chalk. Her skin had gone gray, spotty, there was the loss of her hair, a gray mass of clumps, and it all put on obscenely. She sat on the side of the bed. In her leg was the white ingrown, whole below, he could just make out the ivory hair between her legs. For a moment, he lifted his eyes and stared out, at the night and at several lit windows and in the dark and compassal glow of the scene tried to recover an ancient sense of his romance.

In the silence of the room, he understood that the year

"Will we sleep in the same bed?" she asked. (Until now she and Rosalind had shared the bed, he'd taken a sofa downstairs.)

"Of course," he added, to back it up. They had not had sex in years, sex was quite impossible.

"What is your plan for the future?" she asked.

She put on her nightgown and lay back, covered herself with the sheet and blanket.

It was too much that he should recall the same display of himself. Not did she ask. Once, as young people, they had paraded naked before each other in expensive hotels, though always a little shy. It was one with the affairs of who they had been, the way they had gone about things. The couple on the cover of *Harper's International*, gurgles and morally still. Briefly the most coveted couple in America. Sometimes, during lights, he had reminded her of that small fact.

Now he turned off the lights and addressed. He folded his clothes and coughed twice.

"Your hair looks so stiff," she asked out of the dark.

When an Oscar, impaled on a side.

"I'm expected to live," he said lightly. He climbed to rest to bed, in pajamas. From her side, a heat rose. It was like a mild opening, something between Robert Montgomery and Carole Lombard. Soon, something would happen, he was sure, though what it was, what turn it would take, comic or tragic, this was the uncertain element. He was, in any case, far from sleep. She had taken pills to help her. This wild stirrings of the Baltimore spring approached the window, which rattled. Thinking her asleep, he got up to close it, then, catching the bed, saw her eyes wide open.

"Strangers," she said, and he waited. "To be here."

SOME THEY HAD CUSTOMS, AN ORDINARY COFFIN'S religion of habits. They ate at the proper times and cut their food carefully and stared out the windows of the modest restaurants they frequented. Once they would have torn apart their fellow diners, the gratuitous hate, the ridiculous silent war, but now they took their food and nothing aware that they were as ridiculous as anyone else. An older couple, unknown as to the guests, sharing only the most banal conversation in place conversation, declining orders. It took an abnormally long time for Zeldi to get out of her seat, to slip her spring coat on. Scott took a toothpick and wound. He watched their habits descend to those of a class he had once scorned, and didn't seem to mind. The first exposure to the evening air was comic.

There lives could almost be said to be regular once escape, of course, for Zeldi's madness. And madness was a thing that came and went. You could believe, for long passages of time, that it was not important. Then a streetcar would make a rude noise and Zeldi, clinging to him, would have to be brought home, and any plans they'd made for the evening canceled.

Still, madness was a thing with them so long it began to give way to a form of nostalgia. Zeldi asked, for instance, one Saturday, if they might go walking on the grounds of Sheppard Park, where she had once tried to throw herself in front of a train. She returned on following certain paths. He was struck, moved even, by what she was doing. By the instant, nearly demented cast of her features as she scolded out some street delicacies, worked it the way a tongue does a missing tooth. Madness had altered, for him, the map of the world. It was this that touched him, the privacy of it, the way she felt compelled now to trace her own existence topographically, to make a record of the moment.

In the summer he bought a car, cheap, barely functional, but enough to get them out into the country during week-ends. Baltimore was hot, and they had not much money. Gellert had bought automobile rights to *The Last Town*, thought at an enormously low figure. And there was Scott at Vassar. Still, the WPA had been set to accommodate them. There were parks in Maryland where Zeldi might rest her head against his stomach for an hour or two and sleep. There were his biggest moments. He kept talking about now, felt no compulsion to work on Saturdays and Sundays. Monroe felt was safely on a plane that would crash. Scott could see his head's desire among on a set of graded steps, to the road on which they arrived late in June, from from school, to stay for a week. He abandoned the bed, allowed the women to sleep wrapped in each other, brought them coffee in the morning. At night, under the single lamp of the kitchen, they placed themselves from a curtain. Scott in his shirtwaist, Zeldi laughing. To his agent, Harold Ober, he wrote, "I am sending it all, just as if there were never pain and shame involved! Don't believe me? You would if you could look on my window, on the nights when I'm generous and walk down to the corner to bring back my crates. We are a cozy little family, except, of course, for our ghosts."

During the evenings of Scott's stay, as he lay on the downstair sofa trying to hold onto consciousness in extra

few minutes, simply to relish that much longer the state of his family at rest, the ghosts that visited him were mostly fictional ones, and it occurred to him that he had outlived them all. Dick Drove had been sent down driving from town to town, asked and in decline, Jay Gatsby left lying face down in a pool. In his imagination, there had been only a sudden descent from the cloud-capped tower. The world of the imagination had been perished. George Wilson's dream of finding cars while Myrtle screamed. Tim Buchanan. He found now that he had to adjust his sense of identification. He was becoming like his own secondary characters, those for whom it was enough to simply hold on.

THE NEXT THING, OF COURSE, WOULD BE TO SIMPLY accept what had been promised to him and settle in, but he found in himself, on even the happenings of his nights, the seeds of resistance, and wondered when they might appear. In a note to his publisher describing *The Last Town*, he had written about Monroe. "She," he had written about Monroe. "She has had everything in life except the privilege of giving herself unconditionally to another human being," and it was this that he considered his own noble purpose in having brought Zeldi back from the dead. It worked, to a degree, so long as he was writing. But there came a day early in September when he had to read the book in. A good day, at least at the beginning. In the post office, he hesitated, and looked into the clerk's eyes, trying to offer that brave, good-looking young man an indication of the triumph he felt.

The clerk smiled, nudged him a moment, then looked to the next person in line. Scott is a captain, stationed in Iowa. A medal by Congress for the great act of post office. In a minute, the clerk would have downed back and taken all this to the great writer in the crowd, the cigarette smoke, the smell. Then the package on its conveyor belt, going on to Scribner's. Until suddenly downed back into close-up, inhibiting the pleasant smile (against Scott's orders, but the book, after all, was finished), he was weak by the emptiness of his situation: the novel sent off, the day passing before him, and all the energy he had learned to harness and put to use struggling inside him, with nowhere to go. He walked back to the townhouse, where Zeldi was sitting at middaynoon. "We'll take a drive," he said, distracted, annoyed now by the strange presence of her.

"Where?" she wanted to know.
"I haven't seen my driver yet."
"This was not strictly true." He had seen it, but not visited it since his father's burial ten years ago. The old man was in the Catholic cemetery in Rockville, fifty miles distant. It was a desecration, a place to go. There was no more to his suggestion than that, at least not at first, but she looked at him as if there were. He edged in his chair, breathed out heavily, put his hand on his chest, reconsidered. But by then, she had already got up to dress.

The day was hot. A street was being repaved, a small parade planned. It was difficult getting out of Baltimore, and if the truth were told, he'd rather be making that journey by himself, swerving his trunk alone. He felt an impulse, a

wild desire—not now, certainly, but not for a while this way—to say cruel things to Zeldi. They talked in the city here. Zeldi said nothing and may have been praying silently. It occurred to him that he could rip her dress without thinking. He could expose her there, in the car, for everyone to see, and stand it his seat and point at her scaly breasts and throat. "You think I love those? Anytime? My life has been a colossal mistake!" Such actions seemed merely a half-step away.

Wildly, traffic moved. A breath held minutes.
"Say something," he said to Zeldi. "Say any damn thing."
She glanced at him, and, without danger, closed her eyes, slept while. He drove Anthony Kelly House road in the depths of the Maryland countryside and the house resembled Belvedere's set for *Tins*. The one-story, shabby roadhouses were more inviting. He'd completed his best novel, his hardest and toughest. It would be all right, certainly, today only to let go that he had this woman beside him and he was remembering—forcing himself to, anyway—the last time he had let go with her, in Cuba, when she'd ended up looking in a room, crying, while he'd nearly had his eye taken out in a fight. Or had that been some another time? He fought the sedulous, swallowed back drove on, a scolding, and a punishment, to have finished, and to be facing only solitary, darkness, rain. Would she like to read to him from his Bible? The Book of Ruth, perhaps? He felt, in his imagination, the sting of his hand against those cheeks, clapping her back into him. She was intent on looking down him, and he wanted something, suddenly very badly, if not from her then from another source. He pulled over at the next roadhouse.

The establishment was located at the top of a hill, behind it, the land fell off sharply. There was a wide circle for cars. He heard water somewhere not far off. Zeldi arose. She stood at the building, seemed to know what it was. Her anxiety took the form of something he knew.

Scott opened the door and got out.
He stood by the fence. He'd his shoe, looked at her. He was concerned with a couple of accidents in the book, worried to call it back would wear for Patrick's reply. Zeldi would not look at him now. That being the case (had he stopped her only to see her), he was going to have a drink, one or two. More. There was no end to what he imagined. When was tomorrow, and the next day, what would he do? He touched the warm hand of the car. She turned to him.

Supper, he thought suddenly. Supper.
There was a moment then when she looked at him in the old way. A reservoir of feeling opened, that the couldn't hold it, or his gaze. It had given him that, though in his mind's eye, he saw the back he must have now, must, which would arrive, going in and getting drunk and radiating her to the bartender until he was driven out, and then he would say the same foolish things to her, until someone drove them home or beat him up or did something to end it. And he must do this, he must have her, though it had begun to seem to him, standing there, a source of infinite mystery that this old, pale woman in the car should require from him punishment as severe.

"I should tell you that I'm going to come to Rockville to come and get me," she said, and it had a kind of delicious poise to it, something recovered from deep in the past. She looked at though she feared what he would say next.

He came around and opened the door of the car.
"Get out," he said.
She didn't like the way he looked, the dead around her temples, the manner in which he was clatching himself near the straps.

"Don't shouldn't."
"I can see what I shouldn't be doing," he said.
He thought the line was melodramatic. He was dragging her into the woods. He suspected how they must look on the great lake, in the dream that had been saying herself up as if for some occasion. He had no idea what his intention was except that there was nothing out of it, nothing he could see, anyway. He wanted to be finished with her just as he had finished the book. The two had gone together, always, and he believed now was certain (and wanted to punish himself for it), that it had been, after all, a false love, a good to achievements, nothing more.

Then they were in the woods, and stood there, facing the trickling brook, which was not much, and which flowed at a considerable distance down the hill. Around them were wild strawberries, blue flowers, ancient, the pale growth of late summer. He was holding her hand, and in the gesture there was still the potential for violence, though it was lessened, and he thought suddenly when she had brought her here for, or what he intended to do. She might not have known, though, that she was safe, because she felt against him, as a way, he thought, of escaping his grasp. She felt like a woman collapsing under the force of a man's passion. It was impossible then, from the way she lay on the ground, the way her legs felt, that their old sex shouldn't have roared in his head. For a moment, neither of them looked away from it, but locked eyes. It hovered between them and asked to be considered, and he thought, as it did so, that it was a thing—not the sex itself, but the charge out of which it had sprung—that neither of them would ever escape.

Really, Zeldi closed her eyes and wished it away. In the moment, she was left with it, with the summation of feeling, as real a companion as he could imagine.

Calm now, the sex and everything it carried seemed held in abeyance, as if waiting for him to acknowledge what was left to be acknowledged. He touched his scalp, felt the thorniness of the skin, the thick veins pressing against it. How long before a repetition of the revolt of the heart? He read two fingers on Zeldi's forehead. He would be his sleep, then they would get up, brush each other's clothes off, and continue on the ride to Rockville. There, he would clear whatever dead growth was to be found around his father's grave, finish the earth, and say something brutal, cold, and officious, in place of prayer. The words in his heart, which had begun to rise in the moment before, as Zeldi lay below him, recurred then, having no grace allowed themselves to be read. They would, to be sure, have been too harsh to speak. He remembered, instead, a day at Cayo d'Archez, the water of the Mediterranean, his hand on his knee, and Scott close, and Zeldi. Someone was taking their photograph, he remembered now. They had held their poses a long time, not out of happiness certainly. There are one or two moments to which one returns time. One neither moves from their nor retreats. He ran his hand up and over Zeldi's forehead and said, with his hand, *Now we're*. *Now we're*. *Now we're*.

A PEBBLE IN HIS SHOE

No wonder Hatcher looked drained when he emerged from the bedroom each day

THE BATTLE, IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE, WAS Egyptian in motif and baffling in its design, as if the architect had proceeded with his first draft and been wildly off target. Consider that seemed outrageous, suddenly turned sick and came to an abrupt ending. The bar was out on a wend itself. Only with luck could Jack find his room without assistance. At first, he took on some of the responsibility for his confusion, assuming that the hotel was probably brilliant in its conception and it was his fault for not getting the hang of it. He then learned that a group of Lebanese had lost millions on its wild and perilous construction and had finally thrown up their hands and sold it back to the French at an enormous loss. The new owners, offering immaculate service, exotic and fresh cuisines, were inching their way toward a profit.

He had come to France for some talks with a film actor he admired named Marty Hatcher. Brilliant in his career in England, Hatcher had performed adequately in American films and had gotten rich. He continued to be brilliant in France, and it was the French that Jack remembered—a lusty, sedate, a rich, a relaxed life, the perfect imagination of a familiar world. Which was not why Jack made the trip. A French producer had paid for it, considerable sums would come, Jack's way if the proposed film got off the ground.

A nice bonus was that he liked Hatcher, although their first meeting had begun ominously. Much like the design of Jack's hotel, the notion he proposed to Hatcher had been wildly off target. Jack saw himself as having made a wasted trip and falling into general despair. In this situation, another man might have been cruel and let him founder. But Hatcher had gently eased him onto safe and comfortable ground. In question, what they would do to keep the outlines of Jack's idea and drop the politics (an instant to the neopolitical Hatcher). And they would, of course, hold on to the fun. They had been eating at a four-star restaurant with Hatcher's fourth wife, a lovely woman named Hillary who had to be some three decades or more younger than the man. Hatcher. It was only when Hatcher had pushed aside the crust that Jack felt able to take his first deep, satisfied breath. The days that followed were easy and peaceful—good, off-season nights, light work, ripe local wines, the three of them taking trips to inspect the seaside house that Hatcher was having built in a nearby village. Portuguese construction men with fat hands lovingly shaped the new house.

All of this pleasure in spite of the fact that their group was off balance. Jack was alone. Hatcher's wife had a perfect face and smile, aristocratic eyes, it was as if amazing stories were continually being whispered in her ear. Hillary chose them about in a French at her dining spreads. Jack assumed she was a good driver, although her success depended upon everyone else, politicians and other drivers, playing their roles to perfection. She had done a few small roles in films, her specialty being young girls bewitched by first love. But she did not have the usual exotic background. Her father had been a naturalist of some prominence and her mother, a poet, had once been short-lived for the *Booker Prize*.

There was an instant connection between Hillary and Jack, but he chose, if not to ignore it, to fence it. At the end of the evening, when they were highly and happily drunk on wine, the three of them would stand and hug one another, a three-way embrace. Then Jack would return to his hotel to think about Hatcher and wonder about Hillary though not to cover her. He was alone, but he did not feel in the least be lonely. As long as the west did not go on and on.

His first new house was being built. Hatcher and his wife had rented a villa some five hundred yards from Jack's parents of a hotel. Hatcher, who had suffered a stroke, liked to sleep late and to begin work at noon. Since Jack rose early at least in foreign countries, that left him with the morning to kill. He took fresh walks through a nearby forest area, trying to ignore the past, patrolling dogs of a breed he had never encountered, then fingered merchandise in the port area, after breakfast, he sat out on the wharf, putting his face up to the sun. Out of the corner of his eye, he watched fishermen making operatically hostile gestures at one another—any one of which would have caused instant death in the way in which Jack lived. But these men were fishermen were friends and generally walked off with an arm. Promptly at noon, he would appear at Hatcher's villa, generally to find that the actor had six women. Hillary would flash by in a robe, legs exposed, apologetically reaching her hands through rings of golden hair. Hatcher would appear soon after also in a robe, dazed, flushed, also apologetic, and begin to restate Frenchmen for Jack, as an offering for his being late. That was the extent of their work, Hatcher doing instantaneous of commerce he wanted to work into the movie—spoons, and Englishmen, alcoholic Frenchmen, doblating old white colonials. He would do them into a German made tape recorder, one of several discs he had placed around the house, the idea being



TOBIAS WOLFF

THE CHAIN

He loved his daughter and wanted justice. What could be wrong with that?

BRIAN GOLD WAS AT THE TOP OF THE HILL when the dog attacked. A big black wolf-like dog attached to a chain, it came flying off a back porch and tore through its yard into the park, moving easily in spite of the deep snow making for Gold's daughter. He waited for the chain to pull the dog up short, but the dog kept coming. Gold plunged down the hill, shouting as he went: Snow and wind deadened his voice. Anna's dad was alone at the bottom of the slope. Gold had raised the hood of her parka against the swirling gusts, and he knew that she could not hear him or see the dog racing toward her. He was conscious of the dog's speed and of his own dizzying progress, the weight of his gun boots, the clinging trap of snow beneath the new snow. His outcreek flapped at his knees. He screamed one last time as the dog made its lunge, and at that moment Anna flinched away and the dog caught her shoulder instead of her face. Gold was barely halfway down the hill, arms pumping, feet sliding in the boots. He seemed to be running in place, held at a fixed, unbridgeable distance as the dog dragged Anna backward off the sled trailing her like a doll. Gold threw himself down the hill helplessly, close the distance vanished and he was there.

The sled was overturned, the snow churned up, the dog had marked that ground as its own. It still had Anna by the shoulder. Gold heard the ragged howling in its gasp. He saw the raised headqu Coast and the fanned-out ears and the red gleam of gum under the wrinkled snout. Anna was on her back, her face blanched and blank, staring at the sky. She had never looked so small. Gold sensed the chain and yanked at it but could get no purchase in the snow. The dog only snarled more feracly and started shaking Anna again. She didn't make a sound. Her silence made Gold go hollow and cold. He flung himself onto the dog and hooked his arm under its neck and pulled back hard. Still the dog wouldn't let go. Gold felt no heat and the profound terrible of no will. With his other hand he tried to pry the jaw loose. His gloves turned slippery with blood, he couldn't get a grip. Gold's mouth was wet in the dog's ear. He said, "Let go, damn you," and then he yanked the ear between his teeth and hit down with everything he had. He heard a yelp and something crashed against his nose, knocking him backward. When he pushed himself up, the dog was running for home, jerking its head from side to side, scanning fluffs of blood on the snow.

"THE WHOLE THING TOOK MAYBE FIFTY SECONDS," GOLD said. "Maybe less. But it went on forever." He'd told the story many times now, and always mentioned this. He knew it was true to marvel at the way time could stretch and stall, but he was unable not to. Nor could he stop himself from repeating that it was a "mistake"—the radiologist's word—that Anna hadn't been crippled or disfigured, or even killed, and that her doctor did not understand how she'd escaped damage to her bones and nerves. Though badly bruised, her skin hadn't even been broken.

Gold loved his daughter's face. He loved her face as a thing in itself, to be wondered at, studied. Yet after the attack he wouldn't look at Anna in the same way. He kept seeing the dog lunge at her, and himself stuck forever on that hill, then his heart began to leak, and he grew sad and restless and angry. He didn't want to think about the dog anymore—he wanted a cut of the picture. It should be put down. It was crazy, a mess, and it was still there, waiting to tear into some other kid, because the police refused to do anything.

"They won't do a thing," he said. "Nothing."

He was going through the whole story again with his cousin Tim Rourke on a Sunday afternoon, a week after the attack. Gold had called him the night it happened, but the past about the police was sure, and Rourke got all evening, sensible sense of justice and a ready store of loyal outrage that Gold had drawn on ever since they were boys. He had been alone in his anger for a week now and wanted some company. Though his wife claimed to be angry too, she hadn't seen what he had seen. The dog was an abstraction to her, and she wasn't one to brood anyway.

What was their excuse? Rourke wanted to know. What reason did the cops give for their complicity and utter worthlessness?

"The chain," Gold said. "They said—this is the really beautiful part—they said that since the dog was chained up, no law was broken."

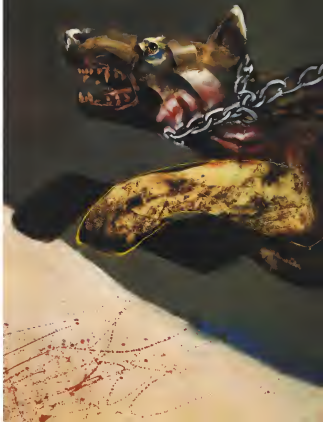
"But the dog wasn't chained up, right?"

"He was, but the chain reaches into the park. I mean, why is a good thirty, forty feet."

"By that logic, he could be on a chain ten miles long and legally chew up the whole fucking town."

"Exactly."

Rourke got up and went to the picture window. He stood close to the glass and glowered at the falling snow.



"What is it with Nazis and dogs? They've got a real thing going, over source that." Still looking out the window, he said, "Have you called to a lawyer?"

"Day before yesterday."
"What'd he say?"
"She, Kate Miller. Said the police were full of shit. Then she told me to forget it. According to her, the dog'll die of old age before we ever get near a courtroom."

"That's the legal system for you, Brian, see boy. They'll give you all the justice you want, as long as it's up the ass."

There was a loud thump on the ceiling. Anna was playing upstairs with Rourke's boy, Michael. Both were under three years old, sweet, and when no one screamed, Gold said, "I don't know why I even bothered to call her. I don't have the money to pay for a lawyer."

"You know what happened," Rourke said. "The cop who took the complaint fucked it up, and now the others are covering for him. So, you want to take him out?"

"The cop?"
"I was thinking of the dog."
"You mean kill the dog?"
Rourke just looked at Gold.
"Is that what you're saying?"
Kill the dog?

Rourke grinned, but he said, "I didn't say anything."

"How do you want?"

"Christ, Tim, I can't believe I'm talking like this."

"But you can," Rourke showed the napalyptic cartoon with his foot until it was facing Gold, then sat on it and leaned forward, so close their noses were touching. "No poison or glass. That's chutzpah, I wouldn't do that to my own enemy. Take him out clean."

"Christ, Tim," Gold tried to laugh.

"You can use my Remington, scope him in from the hill. Or if you want, get up close with the .44 Magnum. You ever fired a postie?"

"Don't forget the Magnum, then."

"I can do that."

"Sure you can."

"They'll know it was me. I've been raising hell about that dog all week. Who do you think they're going to come after when it suddenly shows up with a hole in its head?"

Rourke smiled in his chest. "Point taken," he said. "Clay, you said it. But I sure as hell can."

"No. Forget it, Tim."

"You and Mary go out for the night. Have dinner at Chez Nicole or Ruby's, somewhere small where they'll remember you. By the time you get home it's all over and you're clean as a whistle."

Gold finished his beer.

"We're not to take care of business, Brian. If we don't, nobody will."

"Maybe if I did it. Maybe. Having you do it—that gun doesn't feel right."

"What about that dog still running wild after what it did to Anna? Does that feel right?" When Gold didn't answer, Rourke shook his head. "Did you really hear the man's car?"

"I didn't have any choice."

"Was it off?"
"No."
"But you drew blood, right? You used blood."
"I got some in my mouth, yes. I couldn't help it."
"It tasted good, didn't it? Come on, Brian, don't bullshit me, it tasted good."

"There was a certain satisfaction," Gold said.

"You want to do what's right," Rourke said. "I appreciate that. I value that. It's your call, okay? But the other stands."

ROURKE PROPOSED THE CRACK ABOUT NAZIS AND dogs not from deep reflection, Gold knew, but because to call people Nazis was his first response to any violence or slight. Once he'd heard Rourke say it, though, Gold could not forget it. The picture that came to mind was one he'd pondered before: a line of shaven dogs hurrying Jews along a railway platform.

Gold was Jewish on his father's side, but his parents split up when he was young, and he'd been raised Catholic by his mother. His name didn't suit him, he said, it made him seem ridiculous. When you heard Gold's name, she said, you think of his gold?

With that name he should be a rich sportsman—a weekend-seeker with a flying business. The Black kids who came into his video store were tremendously of that opinion. They had a mock-formal way of saying "Mr. Gold," drawing out the word as if it were the precious substance itself. Finding themselves a little short on the racial line, some of them weren't above asking him to make up the difference out of his own deep pockets and sitting around if he refused. The many Toyotas he had lined up out front was a puzzle to them, a conversation piece, they couldn't figure out why, with all his money, he didn't get himself a decent set of wheels. One night, standing at the counter with his friends, a girl suggested that Gold keep his Cadillac at home because he was afraid the brothers would steal it. They'd been goofing on him, just messing around, but when she said this everyone went silent as if a hard truth had been spoken.

Cadillac. What else?

After years of antagonism, Gold had returned to the Catholic church, and went weekly to Mass to sustain his fragile faith, but he understood that in the eyes of the world he was a Jew. He had never known what to make of that. There were things he saw in himself that he thought of as Jewish, traits not conspicuous among the mostly Irish boys he'd grown up with, including his parents. Bookishness, patience, a taste for classical music and complicated morality, aversion to alcohol and violence. All that he found acceptable, but he had certain other tendencies, less clear to him, that he also suspected of being Jewish. Corrosive self-mockery. Boas of almost paralytic discomfort. Physical awkwardness. A disposition toward passivity, even submission, in the face of bullying people and oppressive circumstances. Gold knew that these slants of Jewishness were also held by anti-Semites, and he resisted their influence, without much success.

In the already familiar pattern that Rourke had conjured up, of Jews being herded by dogs, Gold sensed an

existence of the persecution that he doubted in himself. He knew it was unfair to blame people for not fighting an evil that their very innocence made them incapable of imagining, yet even while admitting that they were brutalized and starved and in shock, he couldn't help but wonder: Why didn't one of them hit a guard—grab his gun—take some of the bastards with him? Do something? Even in his awareness of the terrible injustice of this question, he'd never really laid it to rest.

And with that old image vivid in his thoughts, it seemed to Gold that the question had now been put to him. Why didn't he do something? His own daughter had been seized by yet such a dog, a blacky away from having his face torn off. He had seen an inventory, felt an electric wall to him. And it was still out there, lying in wait, because no one, not even Gold himself, would do what needed to be done. He couldn't escape the consciousness of his own inaction. In the days following his conversation with Rourke, it became intolerable. No matter where else he was, at home or in the store, he was also on that hill, unable to move or speak, watching the dog come at Anna with murder in its heart and the chain gliding behind like an invisible black snake.

He drove by the park late one day and stopped across the street from the house where the dog's owner lived. It was crowded with a line of dormer windows, a big overgrown house like most of the others around the park. Gold thought he could guess why the police had been so docile. That wasn't a shooting gallery, a crib for perverts and scofflaws. The deep shadow of the house brooded against the great green grass, the glittering diamonds in the foyer, the Cicerone's sweep of the staircase with its monumental newel post and glimmering rail—all this would tell you that the law was among friends here. Of course a dog needed room to roam. If people in their beds go turning off every which way they'd have to live with the consequences. Some folks were just natural-born whiners.

Though Gold despised of the police, he believed he understood them. He did not understand the people who'd allowed this to happen. They had never asked to apologize, or even to ask Anna why she was. They seemed sure that their dog was a killer. Gold had done his best with some notion of coming down with them, helping them see what they ought to do—what if they'd even let him in the door. "What a pussy!"

He called Rourke that night and told him to go ahead.

ROURKE WAS NOT ON THE IDEA OF GOLD TAKING Mary out for dinner—his treat—on the big night. He had a theatrical conception of the event, which seemed to include the two of them tussling him with champagne while he did whatever he meant to do. Gold refused the offer. Mary didn't know what they were up to, and he couldn't sit across a table from her for three hours, even as the band was being done, without talking. She wouldn't like it, but she wouldn't be able to stop it; the knowledge would only be a burden to her. Gold employed a graduate student named Karen who covered the store at night, except for Tardis, when he had a seminar. Though Rourke was disappointed by Gold's banishment, he agreed. Tuesday night it was.

More snow fell that morning, followed by an ice storm. The streets and sidewalks were still gleamed by nightfall and

business was slow. As always, Gold had a new refuse plying in the monitor above the counter, but he couldn't follow the plot through the frantic cutting and ugly noise, so he stopped it halfway through and didn't bother to put it in another. That left the store oddly quiet. Maybe for this reason his customers didn't linger in the usual way, shooting the breeze with Gold and one another. They made their selections, paid, and left the trend to read the paper. At 8 p.m. Anna called to say she'd won a poster contest at school. After the beep up, Gold returned a light on from the Donny's across the street. Two men, drunk or drugged, had a shouting match, and one of them took a clumsy swing at the other. They grappled and fell down together on the ice. A deliveryman and one of the cooks came outside and helped them up, then walked them off in different directions. Gold macrovised the shift left over from Sunday dinner. He ate slowly, watching the sluggish procession of cars and the hunched, gingerly trudge of people past his window. Mary had had on the carnis with a fine hand, which was just how Gold liked it. His forehead grew damp with sweat, and he took off his sweater. The baseball baters rickled. The long fluorescent lights buzzed overhead.

Rourke called just before ten, when Gold was closing up. "Sucker has heated his last bone," he said.

"Sucker?"

"That was his name."

"I wish you had told me."

"I got his collar for you—a little memento."

"The Christ's sake, Tim."

"Don't worry, you're clear."

"Just don't tell me any more," Gold said. "I'm afraid I'll say no more when the police come by."

"They're not gonna come by. The way I feel things, they won't even know what happened." He coughed. "It had to be done, Brian."

"I guess."

"No guessing about it. But I've gotta say, it wasn't anything I'd want to do again."

"I'm sorry, Tim. I should've done it myself."

"It wasn't one thing. It'll take a while. It marks full silent. Gold could hear him breathing. I about froze my ass off. I thought they'd never be the damned best out."

"I won't forget it," Gold said.

"Damn. It's over. Go to peace."

IN LATE MARCH, ROURKE CALLED GOLD WITH A STORY of his own. He'd been putting up on fine Bookends when a BMW backed away from the ice and put a crane in his door. He yelled at the driver, a black man wearing sunglasses and a knit cap. The driver ignored him. He held straight ahead and drove off across the lot into the road, but not before Rourke got a good look at his license plate. It was a vanity tag, say to remember—except that Rourke called the police, who tracked the driver down and returned him for leaving the scene of an accident.

So far, so good. Then it turned out the driver didn't have insurance. Rourke's company agreed to cover most of the bill—eight hundred bucks for a loose dent—but that still left him with the three-hundred-dollar deductible. Rourke figured Mr. ACME as should make up the difference. His insurance agent gave him the man's name and particulars, and Rourke started calling him. He called twice

at reasonable hours, after dinner, but both times the woman who answered said he wasn't in and gave Reuzle the number of a club on Townsend, where he got an answering machine. Though he left clear messages, he heard nothing back. Finally Reuzle called the first number at 7:00 A.M. and got the man himself, Mr. Vick Barnes.

"That's W-I-C-K," Reuzle said. "I've noticed the way they do that with their names! You shorten Victor, you get Vic, right? V-I-C. So where does the fucking K come from? Or Sean, S-E-A-N. Been spelled like that for about five hundred years. But not there, they've gotta spell it S-H-I-V-W-N. Like they have a right to that name in the first place."

"What did he say?"

"Gave me a lot of mouth, mate. First he got indignant that I woke him up, then he says he's already been through all this shit with the police, and he doesn't believe he let anybody spy on him. Then he hangs up on me."

Reuzle and he knew better than to call back, he wasn't going to get anywhere with this guy. Instead he went to the club, Jack's Study Caravan, where it turned out Mr. Wick Barnes worked as a doorman and no doubt mistle-dope on the side. All the doormen did. Where else would he get the dough for a new leisure? But Reuzle had to admit he was quite the pro, or Mr. Barnes, not mellow nose, good line of patter. Reuzle had a couple beers and watched the doormen, then looking for the car.

It wasn't in the lot. Reuzle poked around and stared it off by itself in a little nook behind the club, where it wouldn't get run into by drunks. He was going back tonight to give Mr. Vick Barnes a taste of his own medicine, plus a little extra for the vigilante.

"You can," Gold said. "They'll know it was you."

"Let 'em prove it."

Gold had understood from the start where this story was taking him, even if Reuzle hadn't. When he said, "I'll do it," he felt as if he were reaching the words from a script.

"No arrest. Just get a camera."

"What a nuisance. I'm hung on." Gold put the recorder down and took a swig from the beer when he returned the sound of music. Then he picked it up and said, "They'll beat you for sure."

"Look, I can't let that guy fuck me over and just walk away. New York, everybody in town'll be looking up to give me the word."

"I told you, I'll handle it. Not tonight—there's a talent show at school Thursday."

"You sure, Brian?"

"I said I'd do it. Didn't I just say I'd do it?"

"Only if you really want to. Okay? Don't feel like you have to."

REMINDER STOPPED BY THE STUDENT TRUSTFUND AFTERNOON with instructions and equipment two BMWs of Chicago's redwood state to pose over the BMW, a hunting knife to slash the men and some the girls, and a crowbar to break the windshield. Gold was to execute extreme tactics. He should work fast. He should leave his car running

and pointed to the direction of a clear exit. If for any reason things didn't look right he should leave immediately.

They loaded the stuff in the trunk of Gold's car.

"Where are you going to be?" Gold asked.

"Cher Nicole. Some place you'd have gone if you had any time."

"I had a good sole amateur last time I was there."

"Prime job for due had boy. Race. Taste of blood, eh, Brian?"

Gold worked his drive off. It was warm day, the third in a row. Last week's snow had turned gray and was offering up its holdings of beer cans and dog turds. The gutters overflowed with melt, and the sun shone on the wet pavement and the broken glass in front of Donnelly's, which had already closed down, leaving their Reuzle's broken lights flashing. He stopped and backed up. Gold wanted while the electric window descended, then heard the car's

"Careful, Brian, okay?"

"You know me."

"Don't get caught. I have to say, that's something you definitely want to avoid."

GOLD DROVE TO THE CLUB at 7:30 with the idea that there wouldn't be much coming and going at that hour on a Wednesday. The casual

drunken would already be home, the serious crowd scattering in for the duration. A dozen or so cars were scattered across the lot. Gold backed into a space as close to the rear of the building as he could get. He turned the engine off and looked around, then popped the trunk, took the crowbar, and moved into the shadows around back. The BMW was parked where Reuzle and it would be, in the short driveway between the alley and the dumpster.

Gold had no intention of using the state or the knife. Reuzle had suffered a dent, that was no reason to destroy a man's car. One good dent in means would even things up between Reuzle and Barnes and settle his own debt in the bargain. If Reuzle wanted more, he was strictly on his own.

Gold walked around the car—a beautiful machine, a gleaming black jet with chrome special wheels that gang members were supposedly killing one another over. The driveway where Gold took his Toyota for repairs also had the local BMW boutique, and he always paid a visit to the showroom while he waited. He liked to open the door, see the doors, sit in the leather seats and watch the gears, compare options and prices. Fully loaded, this model ran in the neighborhood of forty grand. Gold couldn't imagine Mr. Vick Barnes quaffing for that kind of a loan on a doorman's salary, so he must have paid in cash. Reuzle was right. He was dealing.

Gold hefted the crowbar. He felt the drawing pulse of the meat through the club walls, heard the vacuum—he wouldn't call him a singer—shining along with menace and contempt. It was a strange thing, like solid drags to your own people, raising their neighborhoods, naming their children into peasants and drags, and you become a big shot. A man of property and respect. But try to run a modest business, bring something good into the community, and you were a bloodsucking parasite and a

Child of Satan. Mr. Gold. He attacked the bar against his palm. He was thinking maybe he'd do a little something with that knife after all. The state, too. He could track down the state police.

A woman laughed in the parking lot and a man answered in a low voice. Gold watched behind the dumpster and waited until their headlights faded the darkness and vanished. His hand was tight around the metal. He could feel his own rage, and dismissed it. Only a fool acted out of anger. No, he would do exactly what was fair, what he had decided on before coming here.

Gold walked around to the driver's side of the BMW. He held the crowbar with both hands and reached the curved and against the door at bumper height, where Reuzle's car would have been hit. He adjusted his feet. He touched the door again, then cocked the crowbar like a bat and swung it with everything he had, knowing just as he set passed beyond doubt he had absolutely hit him, he had hit himself. The shock of the blow raced up his arm. He dropped the crowbar and left it where it fell.

VICTOR EMMANUEL BARNES FOUND IT THERE THREE hours later. He knelt and ran his hand along the jagged dent in the car door, flexed his palm cutting away under his fingertips. He knew exactly who had done that. He picked up the crowbar, tossed it on the passenger seat and drove straight to the apartment building where Devenaux lived. As he sped through the empty streets he howled and pounded the dashboard. He stepped in a street of broken and scuffed the crowbar and ran up the stairs to Devenaux's door. He pounded the door with his fist. I told you new guy, my motherfucker I told you new guy. He demanded to be let in. He heard voices, but when no one answered him he cursed them and began working at the door with the crowbar. It cracked and splintered. Then it gave and Barnes staggered into the apartment, yelling for Devenaux.

But Devenaux wasn't home. His eleven-year-old nephew, Marcel, was spending the night on the couch after helping Devenaux's little girl give an essay. He stood facing the door while Barnes pressed it, his aunt and cousins and grandmother gathered behind him at the end of the hall, shouting and clapping to one another. When Barnes mumbled something inside, Marcel tried to push him back out. They struggled. Barnes shoved him away and swung the crowbar, catching Marcel right across the temple. The boy's eyes went wide. His mouth opened. He sank to his knees and pushed forward on the floor. Barnes looked at Marcel, then at the old woman coming toward him. "Oh, Jesus," he said, and dropped the crowbar and ran down the stairs and outside to his car. He drove to his grandmother's house and told her what had happened, and she held his hand in her lap and rocked over him and wept and prayed. Then she called the police.

Marcel's death was on the morning news. Every half hour they ran the story, with pictures of both him and Barnes. Barnes was shown being hauled into a cruiser, Marcel standing before his coffin at the All-Cause Society Fair. He had been an honors student at Morris Fields High, a volunteer to the school's Big Brother program, and a past president of the Christian Youth Association. These were no known motives for the attack.

Current crews from the TV stations followed students from their buses to the school doors, asking about Marcel and getting close-ups of the more dramatic. As the beginning of second period, the principal came on the PA system and said that crisis counselors were available for those who wished to speak to them. Any students who felt unable to continue with their classes that day were to be excused.

Garvey Banks looked over at his girlfriend, Tiffany. Neither of them had known Marcel, but it was nice out and there wasn't anything happening at school except people crying and carrying on. When he looked toward the door, she smiled in that special way of hers and gathered her books and collected a pass from the teacher. Garvey waited a few minutes, then followed her outside.

They walked up to Rickel Park and sat on a bench overlooking the pond. They old white ladies were throwing bread to the ducks. The west gate opened in the sun. Tiffany put her head on Garvey's shoulder and listened to herself. Garvey wanted to feel out over that boy getting killed, but it was good being warm like this and close to Tiffany.

They sat on the bench at the sun. They didn't talk. They hardly ever talked. Tiffany liked to look at things and be quiet on herself. Pretty soon they'd rent a movie and go over to Garvey's. They'd kiss. They wouldn't take any chances, but they'd make each other happy. All of that was going to happen, and Garvey was glad to wait for it.

After a while, Tiffany stopped listening. "Ready, Gar?"

"Ready."

They stepped in at Gold's. Video and Garvey took a look at Tiffany's off the shelf. They moved it the first time because of the title, then it became their favorite movie. Sometimes, they were going to be in New York City and know all kinds of people—that was for sure.

Mr. Gold was slow writing up the receipt. He looked ask. He counted out Garvey's change and said, "Why aren't you kids in school?"

Garvey felt cornered and decided to blow a little smoke at the man. "Tired of mine got killed," he said.

"You know him? You know Marcel Foley?"

"Yes, Sir, from way back."

"Was he in class?"

"Marcel? Hey, Marcel was the best. You got a problem, you took it to Marcel. You know, trouble with your girlfriend or whatever. Trouble at home. Trouble with a friend. Marcel had this thing—right, Tiff?—he could bring people together. He just had this way and he was talked to you like you were important, his everybody's important. He could get people to come together, know what I'm saying? Come together and get on with it. Remember Marcel was a peacekeeper. And that's the best thing you can be."

"Yes," Mr. Gold said. "It is." He put his hands on the counter and lowered his head.

Then Garvey saw that he was grieving, and a cone to his heart and under his heart it was like Marcel. Foley had been struck down with his life still before him, all his sunny days under away. It was wrong, and Garvey knew that it would not end there. He reached Mr. Gold's shoulder. "That man'll get his," he said. "Cause on it. He'll get what's coming to him." ■

1

SHORT SLEEVES

Straight down the control room of *Apocalypse Now*, short sleeves have not been in fashion for dress shirts or sweaters for many years. They're geek chic for a generation that likes to hang out on the business. Among the designers reviving them: Dolce & Gabbana, above, and Calvin Klein. You need a pushchair to complete the look.

THE RAGL-COAT

Introduced in 1965, the ragl-coat evokes the glory days of Joe Namath and Times Square. Both problems: Lately designers like Tom Ford of Gucci favor them for both men and women. The far-lined version at right is by Francesco Simola of Fendi. Big draw-back: subway maps.

3

SHORT-CUT PANTS

These changes all along, including these baggyed trousers. Today's trousers are shorter, more tailored, and often made with stretch fabrics. The new box-cut trousers, like those by Richard Tyler, are not for everybody, but they give a look-as look to gray flannel. They are part of an overall trend toward "schmoozy" fabrics at the top of trousers (pinstripes for business at the bottom [flannel or box legs]).

4

THE SAVANNAH SUIT

Variations on the safari or bush jacket, with four flapped patch pockets, were popular in the seventies, when they often had a belted "moccasin back." Such suits made a trend toward more casual appearance. The unlabeled version at left is from the fall 1996 collection of Guccio Pire. Goes well with your Range Rover.

5

ACQUINO TIE

The school- or regional-scarf tie, with its connotations of privilege and tradition, is being revived by some of the most unconventional Italian houses, from Costume Humano to Dolce & Gabbana, right. The narrow versions tend to be ultramodern, more bad boy than old boy.

THE GENTLEMAN

THINGS SO OUT, THEY'RE IN

Some styles, like disco, never completely die

By Woody Hochstetler

THE HAPPY COLLAR

At all, at all, right about now. The thin collar outside-the-pocket look was associated by John Travolta—and considered so demode in recent years that men's designers seemed best to eliminate collars altogether with the band collar shirt. Now this close bridge-and-tunnel look is back, from Dolce & Gabbana, left, and others.

SKINNED LEATHER

Unless you had the forethought to burn them, your old Run-Run shirts, Hagar self-belted slacks, and battered red leather jackets are being enthusiastically snatched up by young men in vintage clothing stores throughout the land. Cordovan leather pants are especially hot, like this one, left, by Richard Tyler. You may not want to look like a Schmitz pring anymore, but a new generation does.



"I created Purple Label because I wanted the perfect suit: hand-tailored, elegant, shepely."
—Ralph Lauren

Three-button wool belt-jacket, Ralph Lauren Purple Label, cordless turtleneck and trousers made also by Ralph Lauren

elegance **with an edge**

standout styles from the new york collections

photographs by turkil gudeusan; produced by john mather



"The inspiration is Edwardian but with a modern length and silhouette."
—Domenico Kaya

—Domenico Kaya

Double-breasted eight-button wool fresh coat and stand-up-collar cotton shirt by Domenico Kaya



"The zip-front jacket is a modern and sleek alternative to evening dress."

—Richard Tyler

Zip-front with crisscrossing evening suit, silk shirt, and suit by Richard Tyler

"My entire life has been influenced by music, my favorite being rock 'n' roll."

—Tommy Hilgner

Three-quarter leather sport jacket, satin shirt, and pleated-front vest/breezers by Tommy Hilgner





"This jacket is a great example of taking something utilitarian and giving it a new dimension through fabric and design."
 —Calvin Klein

Wool-cashmere military coat, plain-front trousers, cotton shirt, silk tie, and leather lace-up boots by Eddie Klein.

"The evening suit is a combination of traditional forms and modern materials used to create a fresh alternative to formal dressing."
 —Joseph Abboud

—Joseph Abboud

—Joseph Abboud

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STYLING: JEFFREY MAYER; HAIR: JEFFREY MAYER; MAKEUP: JEFFREY MAYER; SHIRT: CALVIN KLEIN; TIE: CALVIN KLEIN; COAT: CALVIN KLEIN; TROUSERS: CALVIN KLEIN; SHOES: CALVIN KLEIN



CHECKS ON THE WAY

Man does not live by solids
and pinstripes alone.

For fall, designers have reworked
venerable windowpane and plaids
to give us snappy new takes on the
classic patterned suit.

Photograph by Craig J. Weiss; patches by John B. Quinn



Blue-plaid double-breasted
suit and wool sweater by CFF.
Casualness from: Her shirt
by Alberto Fass, shirt by
A.P.C. Opposite: Green-plaid
three-button single-breasted
sweat suit by Nautica. In: David
Cris, wool vest by C. popo,
zip-front wool polo shirt
by Moschino & Marc. Her
sweater by CK Calvin Klein.

Therapies to ward off pain
gird was the Paul Smith, wool
sweater in black, steel shoes
by Gae Meier. Underneath
in blue threads, watch by
Patek. Her pants to have
Miyoshi, vintage by Ralph
Lauren; clay and shoes by
Montebello; Look, jewelry
by CK Calvin Klein. Tights
Opposite: Clay plant night-
bloasted pink lapel wool,
and silk and her long
sleeves in wool and silk by
Paul Smith. Her skirt and
slits for Miss. Look. Book
about the house for your
information. See page 100.

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered.



(continued)

DISCOVER HOW HAIR TRANSPLANTS CAN HELP YOU

The latest advances in hair transplant technology makes it possible for us to complete most, if not all, of your work in only one session.



Patient P.H. Before (above) and After (right) 1745 grafts in one New Hair Institute Fast Track™ session.



The old "pluggy" look associated with hair transplantation is a thing of the past. The fact is modern hair transplant physicians know the importance of using tiny grafts consisting one, two, or three hairs to create a natural hairline. But how many procedures will you need? Many doctors are still telling patients they must come back again and again for procedures of 100 or 200 grafts at a time. Not at the New Hair Institute. We are proud to be the world's leader in hair transplantation.

New Hair Institute

Professional services provided by New Hair Institute Medical Group

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QUALITY

At the New Hair Institute, we pioneered the Fast-Track™ technique where we can transplant thousands of individual grafts in a single session. This means we can perform a complete restoration in only one or two office procedures. Today, we do as many as 3900 grafts per session. A hair restoration of this size would involve up to 40 surgeries using the old techniques.

VALUE

At the New Hair Institute, we are proud of the work we do and the innovations we have introduced to the hair transplant field. We realize, however, that the patient is our most important judge. That's why we encourage you to do your homework. We believe you have a right to ask questions, to see real patient results, and, most importantly, to be given a realistic assessment of what you can expect from a hair transplant procedure.

RESULTS

Take a look at patient P.H. in the photographs to the left. Before his NHI Fast Track™ session he had the look of a balding man. Then, after only one session of 1745 grafts, he was on his way, the larger picture shows him 7 months after the one procedure.

EDUCATION

Our education program is simple and straightforward. We offer you three informative books on hair, balding, and today's options for your hair transplantation and other hair restoration methods. We provide you with a free video as you can see our results and learn about the actual procedure.

AUTHORITY

For more detailed information, and the chance to see patients up close, we conduct free seminars across the nation. These seminars are a great way to meet doctors, have questions answered, and see several patients in different stages of the hair restoration process. In addition, we also provide prospective patients a complimentary private consultation with one of our doctors at the NHI location near you. Only a qualified doctor can tell you exactly what you need, and that's why, at the New Hair Institute, you won't meet with any fast talking salesman. After a brief introduction, you will meet with the NHI doctor for a personal assessment of your needs.



Call today for more information. All callers will receive three instructive books and our video FREE.

Q&A:

About Hair Transplants

Q & A

How do I know if I'm a candidate for hair transplantation?

The only way to know for certain is to meet with a doctor who specializes in hair transplantation, but it's safe to say that most men who suffer from male pattern baldness are candidates for this procedure.

Q & A

Why will the transplanted hair grow in the same areas where the old hair died?

It is important to understand that there is nothing wrong with the scalp in the balding areas. The problem lies in the actual hair follicles which were genetically programmed to die. The hairs on the back of your head are "permanent" hairs and will grow for the rest of your life in the new location.

Q & A

How do I know which doctor to choose?

- We suggest you always look for:
1. A doctor who specializes in hair transplant procedures full time.
 2. A doctor who uses the smallest grafts possible (1-3 hairs).
 3. A doctor who can complete the restoration in the fewest number of procedures, by placing large numbers of tiny grafts in each procedure. It should require no more than 1 or 2 visits.
 4. A doctor who is willing and proud to introduce you to his patients, who are, in turn, proud to be seen.
 5. A Medical Group that is a recognized leader in true state-of-the-art techniques.

As Seen On Radio



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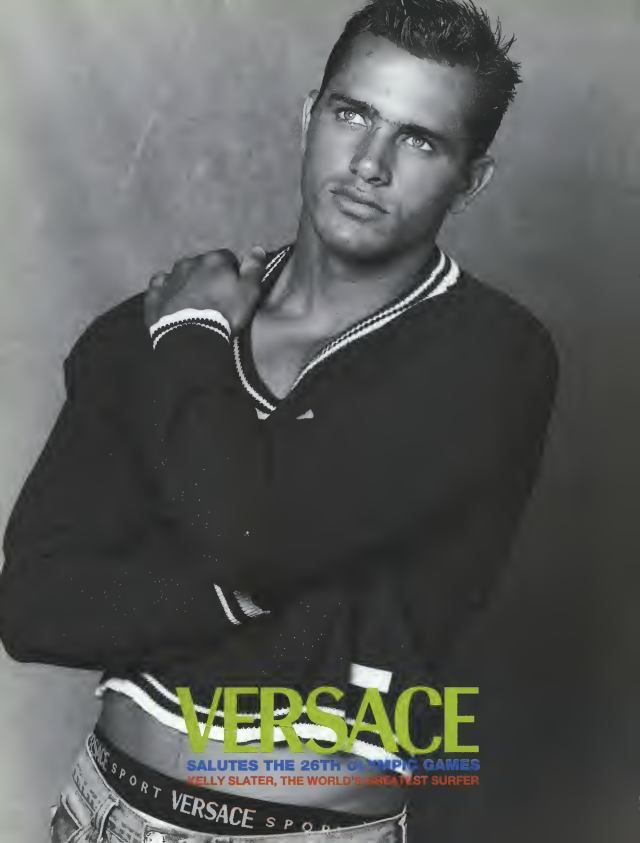
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